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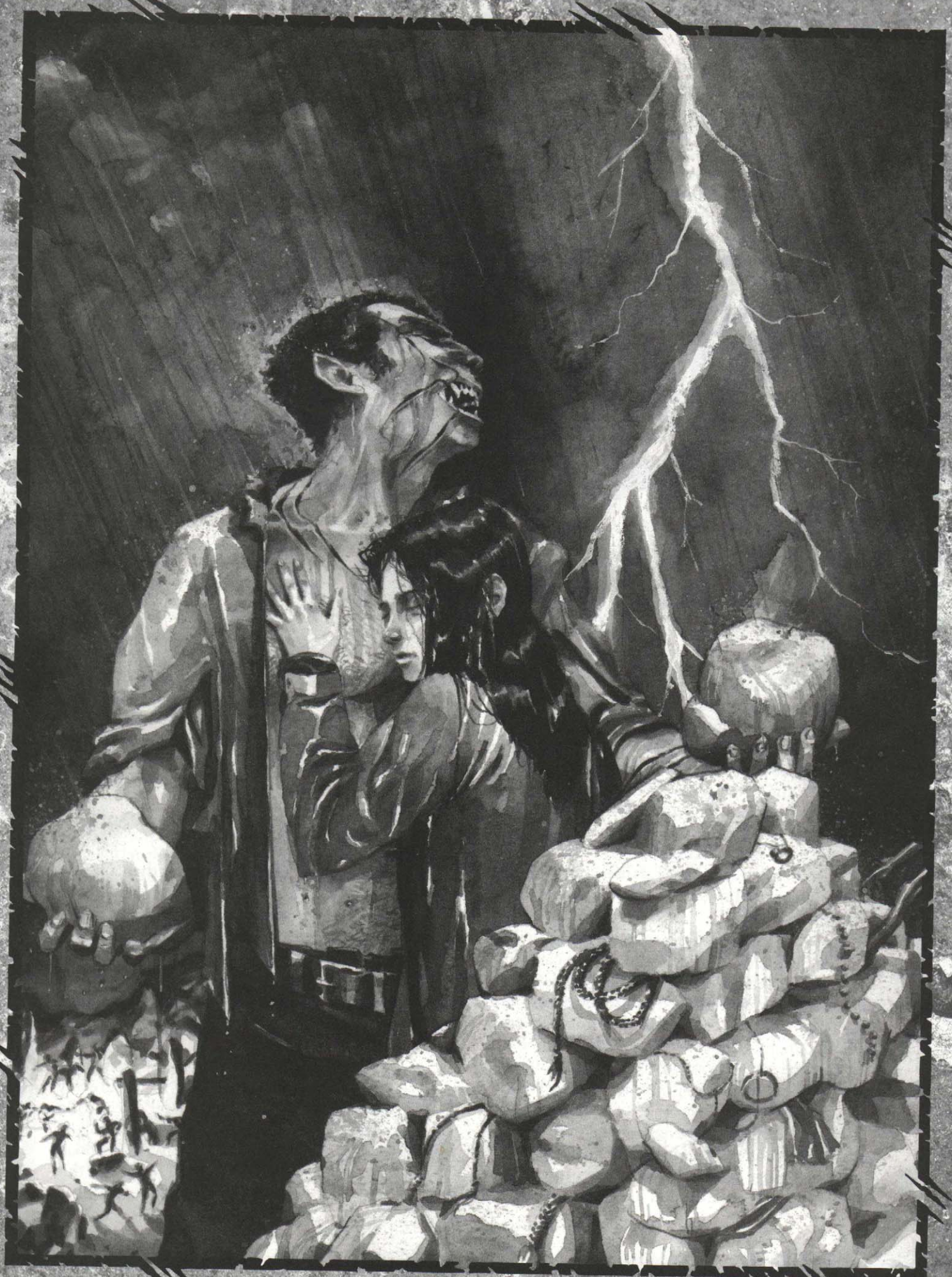

LEGENDS OF THE GAROU

Family Values

It was about as typical a Scottish evening in early winter as you could expect. The cloud, which had hung low over the hill all day, was rolling down the hillside, obscuring the cairn that had sat on its peak as long as anyone could remember. The chill in the air told Leaps-Like-the-Salmon that there would be fog this evening. As the cloud rendered everything into shades of muddy gray, Leaps took one last look at the huge pile of stones, each one marking a Garou or Kinfolk who had fallen in battle. Hundreds of them, piled high as a solid testament to the burden Gaia placed on each and every one of them.

As he looked at it, the lean, tall warrior couldn't decide if the numbness that settled on him came from the changing weather or from the thought that a stone for him might be on that pile by the following evening. He let out a little plea to Stag that they would all return safely and that the fog would be gone by the morning, and then he set off down the hill to join his pack, running his hand nervously through his black, short-cropped hair.

A huge bonfire was burning not far from the river that wended its way through the caern's bawn. Its flickering orange light was visible even through the thickening fog. All around the little groups of werewolves and their Kin that made up the Sept of Mannan's Rock were laughing, drinking and eating, the fire and the good company keeping away the bite of the coming frost. Leaps paused awhile, pulled his coat tighter around himself and drank in the sounds of his sept — his family — enjoying the moment of pleasure that Gaia had granted them.

"Makes you proud to be Fianna, doesn't it, lad?" said a familiar voice on his left.

"Still sneaking up on us young 'uns, then, Greg? I thought you'd have gone off to die in some noble lone battle against the Wyrm by now," said Leaps, affection evident in his voice.

"Ah, well now lad, I don't rightly feel I can be doing that just yet. You see, none of you young bastards can be trusted to have a piss up in a brewery, let alone keep this place safe. So, I'll be hanging around a wee while longer, I reckon."

Leaps glanced over at his uncle, the Warder of the caern for the best part of a decade now. Each and every year of that decade showed on the Warder's face, in the lines and patchwork of scars that were the legacy of more battles than any of them liked to think about. This land wasn't friendly at the best of times, and this

was far from the best of times. "I reckon you just don't want to give up the secret of where the best places to hide that 25-year-old malt you always seem to have at hand are."

"Ah, well, lad, this stuff is something damn special," said Greg as he fished a battered flask out of a pocket. "Me and the lads 'liberated' it from a distillery before some Wyrm-tainted American company got their hands on it." His face turned sober for a moment. "I drink it in memory of them."

He held the flask up to Luna. "To the Chosen of Cernunnos pack, may the Mother care for them."

"The Chosen of Cernunnos pack," agreed Leaps as Greg swallowed a deep draught of the whisky.

Silence fell between them for a little while, broken only by the giggle of a Kin girl who had evidently caught the eye of one of the Garou that night and the sounds of a quick brawl on the other side of the bonfire. Briefly, Leaps glanced up at where the caern should be, but the thickening fog had hidden it from view.

Greg finally broke the silence between them with a long sigh. "So, you ready for tomorrow, nephew?"

"Aye, uncle. I think I am."

"Good. Your pack... they're a good bunch. They'll see you right tomorrow."

"Aye, that they will."

Silence fell once more and it fell to Greg to break it again.

"Here, lad, have a swig," he said, handing Leaps the flask. Leaps shook the morbid thoughts from his head. "Cheers, Uncle," he said. He took a long swing of the whisky and felt the burning tear its way down his gullet.

"That'll keep you warm tonight, lad," chuckled Greg, some of his normal spirit returning.

"I don't need whisky to do that tonight, old man," Leaps laughed back. "I've got the knowledge that we're gonna kick the Wyrm's arse tomorrow and the love of a very, very bad woman to keep me warm tonight. Or have you forgotten what it's like to do the dirty, Greg?"

"Would that be Iona you're talking about lad?" asked his uncle, an amused twinkle in his eye.

"Of course it would. I'm on a promise tonight and I'm looking forward to it."

"Well, if you're not careful, lad, she'll be keeping that promise with Arms-Like-Trees over there, and from what I hear, it's not just his arms that are like trees."

Leaps glanced over to where his pack was gathered around the fire, and saw Arms-Like-Trees paying the beautiful, lithe, auburn-haired girl a little too much attention. The short, stocky werewolf was wrapping a blanket around her as she tried to warm up after the long walk up from the village.

A growl rose in Leaps-Like-the-Salmon's throat as he shifted to Lupus and ran toward the Ahroun, Greg's laughter fading behind him. With one leap he landed on the other werewolf's chest, pushing back onto the damp grass. Iona scrambled to one side, fear flashing across her face. Leaps ignored her. Only putting his packmate back in place mattered. Iona would be his without any doubt then. Even a wolf's mouth could manage the one word he growled at his rival: "*Mine*."

"Och, get off me, you daft bugger," said Arms, pushing the angry wolf away. "I was only keeping her warm for you."

"*Mine*."

"I know, pal, I know. Do you really think I'd be so stupid as to challenge one of the pack on the eve of a battle over a Kin lass?"

"*Mine*."

Arms sighed and rolled suddenly to his left, pitching the wolf off his chest. Both Garou shifted instinctively to Crinos, but Arms was by far the stronger, and he had Leaps pinned before the other could get any purchase on the ground. "Now listen, lad, you'll cut this out, share a beer or two with me and enjoy this night, or I'll make you look like a bloody idiot in front of your woman there," whispered Arms to the struggling Leaps. "D'you want that? Good. I didn't think so. Now as soon as I let you up, it's laughter and friends again. Clear? Good."

"When you boys are quite done, your alpha could do with a drink," said an amused female voice. Sarah "Rends-the-Night" McShane was standing over the pair, intimidating even in her Homid form. Lean and muscular, with a torrent of raven hair down her back, it was easy to see what Douglas, her Kin lover, saw in the alpha. For his part, Douglas was hovering behind McShane, with his arm around his sister Iona in a distinctly protective way.

"Now, are you going to stop behaving like a pair of newly-Changed cubs, or am I gonna have to show you how a real Garou fights?" demanded McShane.

Both of the brawling Fianna abruptly lowered their heads in gestures of submission. This was war — no time to be challenging the leader. "Good boys," smirked McShane, gently ruffling the fur on Arms's nape. "Now, be a good lad and go fetch me a pint or three. I want a word with our Theurge lover-boy here."

Arms didn't bother getting to his feet. He just shifted into Hispo and set off for at a fair run. Leaps melted back down into Homid and sat waiting for the

inevitable lecture from McShane. Instead, she came and set next to him.

"I'm glad to see you care enough about Iona to fight for her, lad. That's a good sign. I like to see some backbone and passion in my pack. But, well, it can create problems and I don't like problems," she said.

Here it comes, thought Leaps.

"You see, Douggie here is very important to me, and what upsets him upsets me. And Douggie loves his sister very much, and whatever upsets her upset him. So, you see lad, what upsets Iona, upsets me. And you don't want me upset, do you?"

Leaps shook his head in mute agreement.

"There's a good lad. Now, you treat Iona right, and I won't have to come round and throat your sorry little arse good and proper. You got it? Good, now let's share a beer and if you treat Iona right, all will be well."

Arms staggered back, carrying enough beer to last the pack through most of the evening. McShane snared a jug from one of the several and swigged straight from it, drinking deep. Eventually, she passed the jug to Leaps, while wiping her mouth with the back of her other hand.

"Damn, that's good stuff. I've got a fire, a drink and my pack around me and all I need now is my lover by my side. Douglas, get that cute arse of yours over here."

Douglas let go of Iona, and made his way to sit by McShane. Iona hesitated a moment and then went to sit by Leaps. He put his arm out and she snuggled into it, enjoying the warmth of his body on the cold night.

"Aw, ain't this a cosy wee scene," said Daughter of Arduinna, the last member of the pack, as she walked up to the others. "Och, you're just jealous, lass," replied McShane, nipping at Douglas's neck.

Daughter affected an offended air. "Nonsense, boss. I just have my mind on our strategy for the morning. Fighting Wyrm-spawn in an oil refinery is not my idea of fun."

Arms-Like-Trees roared with laughter. "Call yourself Garou, woman? It sounds like a whole world o' fun to me. Come here, hen, and drink with me a while. If anything'll put a thirst for a fight into your belly, it's this piss that they're claiming is beer."

Daughter grabbed one of the jars and started quaffing from it. "I see your taste in beer is as poor as your taste in fun, Arms, you idiot," she snorted.

"Y'know what," said Leaps, leaning towards Arms, "I think the lass has a point."

Arms snorted. "I don't care what you think. I'll tell you what I think, though."

"What?"

"I think I know the true reason the boss is called Rends-the-Night."

"Really?

"Yeah, it's because she makes so much noise when she's screwing Douglas!" Arms, hugely amused by his own joke, bellowed with laughter. Iona sniggered in an uneasy way. Leaps quickly looked to see if McShane had heard, and saw to his relief that she was too busy with Douglas to pay any attention to what her pack were saying. Leaps laughed with relief and shoved Arms towards Daughter. "Why don't you two try and find some Kinfolk blind enough to dance with you, and leave me and Iona alone for a bit?"

"Wanna see if she rends the night, huh?" said Arms, digging Leaps in the ribs. "Have fun, man."

For a while after his packmates had left, Leaps lost himself in Iona, listening to her voice, watching the firelight playing over her face, feeling her hair brush against his cheek. They took turns in the dancing, too, but rarely stayed up for more than a single dance. For a while, Leaps-Like-the-Salmon was able to forget his fear and apprehension about the next day. But, all too soon, it came rushing back.

"What's wrong?" asked Iona, seeing the look in his eyes.

"Just.... just thinking about tomorrow," he said, cupping her face in his hand. She looked him in the eyes again and then cuddled up against his chest. He appreciated the silence. They sat together, just enjoying the moment.

Eventually Leaps became aware of his surroundings again and looked around. His packmates had returned with a couple of playmates and were now busy telling each other dirty jokes, while knocking back enough beer to kill a horse. He looked at his alpha, lost in her lover's embrace. And he felt the warmth of Iona's warm body pressed against his. This was the way to live.

And then Iona was on her feet, pulling Leaps towards one of the many huts that were scattered in the woods near the stream. "C'mon, lad, time for bed," she said, the look in her eyes promising a whole lot more than a good night's sleep. Leaps-Like-the-Salmon let himself be dragged away from his pack with a silly smile plastered on his face.

Minutes later, snuggled naked next to her in one of the huts, he sincerely hoped that the night would never end. She smelt so good lying there in his arms that he had to fight back the urge to shift forms to let its sharper senses feast on her scent. Instead he leaned forward and kissed her, long and hard. She pulled away briefly and

looked at him strangely for a moment. "Let's give you something to come home for tomorrow," she whispered, before pulling him close once more.

• • •

The rain pelted down over the hill, slowly soaking through the clothes Leaps had changed into on his return. The other ones weren't in much of a state to be worn any more. Shame about that, he'd have to dedicate a new set at some point — if he could ever be bothered. It's not as if it really matters. Frankly, he couldn't care less about clothes, ruined or sodden, right now. He had a job to do, and he was damned if anything else was going to get in the way.

After his final ascent of the hillside, once he'd put the rock in place, he sat down to recover from his exertions. Despite the weather, the view down into the valley was good and he could see the celebration revels starting to get underway. Somewhere down there, Iona would be waiting for him. Normally the thought of a victory revel, and a night in her arms, would fill him with excitement and anticipation, but today? Nothing.

Once more he looked at the cairn that sat on the hilltop and sighed. It was noticeably bigger than it had been yesterday evening, partially through his own efforts. Each extra stone seemed to weigh on his heart and nothing he did could shake the feeling. Not much point in staying here much longer. His absence would be noticed too quickly, especially after what had happened earlier. He had no choice but to head back.

With sinking spirits, he trod the familiar path back to the living area of the caern, and tried to summon some joy back into his heart, but he could find precious little within himself. He tried focusing on the throbbing pain of his side instead, hoping that it might provoke anger, the desire for revenge on the Spiral that injured him, anything but this growing void which he felt opening up within himself. Still he found nothing. He had to force himself to take each step forward, back into his family who would be celebrating when all he wanted to do was howl his misery to Sister Luna herself.

Greg was waiting for him half way down the hill. He was dressed in traditional garb tonight, the one-piece kilt that he'd wrapped around his body as sodden as the modern clothes that Leaps wore. He expression was severe. He said nothing as his nephew approached, but just held out the battered flask. Leaps ignored it and continued down the hill.

"You'll stop right there, boy," growled Greg. "You'll come back here, and drink from my flask."

Despite himself Leaps stopped, but he didn't turn. He didn't want this confrontation, but he didn't think he could escape it either.

"I know you're hurting, lad. But I still want you to come here, and drink from the flask."

For a while, the only sound that could be heard was the insistent patter of the rain on the ground and the distant sounds of the revel getting underway. Finally, Leaps spoke. "No."

"Come here, and drink, lad," repeated Greg, his voice growing sterner. "I'm yer elder, and you'll do what I say, or I swear by Stag himself, I'll come over there and force this whisky down your idiot throat."

Leaps turned around, anger flashing across his face for the first time. "Why can't any of you understand that I can't bloody celebrate tonight? You selfish bastards, you can't see past your partying, drinking and screwing. Look, I don't care about the fucking traditions of the Fianna. I don't care about the ways of our ancestors or any of that shit. None of it seems to matter now. Don't you understand?"

Greg stepped forwards, holding the flask out in front of him. "Aye. You know I understand." His eyes hardened. "You will take this flask and you will drink, lad, or you'll answer to me. And you'll do it because you know I understand."

Leaps felt a growl beginning to rise in his throat as the first stages of the change to Glabro overtook him. Greg continued to glare at him, the flask still in his outstretched hand. "Don't even think it, lad. You may be young, but I know a few tricks that'll have you whimpering for your Mum before you know what's happened to you."

Leaps felt the black hole within him eat the little anger he had built up. He shrank back to Homid and slumped miserably to the ground. Greg paused a moment, and then came to sit next to his nephew. He opened his flask, and took a sip, relishing the familiar burn in his throat. His nephew was staring up at the cairn again. Greg sighed. This wasn't going to be easy.

"What do you see up there, son? I imagine you see nothing but the deaths every one of those stones represent, don't you? Another noble Fiann taken from us, another loss to grieve after?"

Leaps grunted something that might have been agreement. Greg chose to assume that it was.

"Well, you're wrong. That's not what I see up there, lad. That's not what any good Fiann should see. We know better than that. That's what makes us different. Each of those rocks marks a life lived, and a life lived well. Listen lad, you and I, and all the Garou down there, we're warriors. We're fated to die in combat from the minute we're born into this world. It's what Gaia chose us for, and we should accept that responsibility gladly. It's the only cer-

tainty we have from the moment Stag calls us and we Change for the first time."

He paused to take another swig.

"One day, maybe one not too far off now, it'll be my stone placed up there. I don't mind that fact, lad. I've done good service for the Mother here and I know she'll have a role for me to play once this body is gone. And do you know why else I won't mind? Simple, lad. It's because I made the most of this body while I had the chance.

"Lad, we fight when we have to fight. When we don't we should bloody well enjoy our lives, because we never know when they're going to end. It's a warrior's lot to fight and die. We may call ourselves warriors and druids and bards, but we're all warriors really. Sure, some of us can carry a tune better than others. Others know more about the Otherworld than the rest of us. It doesn't matter. We're all still here to fight.

"But that's not all we are. Look at me. I'm a grandfather, just. I've had more lovers in my time than I can safely count, and I probably have a few wee bairns that I don't even know are my own. I've drunk enough whisky to kill a man many times over and I've traveled from one side of this planet to the other, serving Stag and the Mother. I've feasted well and seen parts of the Otherworld that would melt your young mind.

"I've had a good life, lad. When I'm gone, I don't want you to sit here like some bleeding-heart Child of Gaia mourning my loss — I want you down there, laughing, drinking and celebrating the life that I lived, like the rest of the sept are doing for those who fell today, while we sit here gossiping like fishwives. I've taken the life Gaia gave me, and I thank her that it's been longer than so many of us are granted, and I've enjoyed everything I can. Will you be able to say the same, son?"

Leaps looked at him for a moment, and then put his hand out. Greg placed the flask in his hand, with a smile. "Good lad, I knew you'd see sense. Yer mother would be proud of you."

Leaps look the flask, sloshed the whisky inside around for a moment, and then knocked back a long swig. Eyes watering, he did the flask up, and handed it back to Greg. Then he stood up and without a word, started down the hill again.

Greg unscrewed the top and took another swig. "Ah, lad," he whispered. "It doesn't get any harder than this. I still remember, even after all these years. Sometimes no amount of whisky takes away the pain." The rain soon mingled with the single tear that slid down the old Garou's face.

Leaps strode into the center of a group of Garou, and snatched a bottle from one of them. Without even looking to see what was inside, he necked the lot. Then he flung his head back and let out a long, low cry of victory. Those around him joined in, and within minutes the whole sept was howling their joy at the Wyrm's defeat that day.

The bards, both Kin and Garou, took their cue and the music began as the howls started to fade. Leaps strode quickly through the crowd, searching for one face amongst the many. There, she was, with her brother. Gaia, she looked beautiful tonight. "Iona..." he started and then he saw the expression on Douglas's face, the pain that mirrored his own. He didn't bother trying to speak to him. He just grabbed him and crushed him in a hug, one he felt Douglas return with equal strength. He could sense Iona trying to hug both of them.

At length, the three of them pulled apart. "She died well, my friend, and took many of them with her. Will you join your sister and I in celebrating her memory?" He gestured to the dance that was starting up down by the fire.

"I don't know..." said Douglas, but Iona grabbed both of the men and started pulling them towards the dancers. "C'mon Douggie, you know the traditions as well as us. We're Fianna. We celebrate the lives of those of us who die, we don't ruin our own precious lives with misery."

Reluctantly, Douglas let himself be dragged long with Iona and Leaps to a cleared area where groups of Garou and Kin were dancing reels. The three of them slotted into the circle at the next switch of partner groups and lost themselves in the dance. The music, the laugher, the rapid movement and concentration on the patterns of the dance buried their pain, and for a little while they were able to enjoy the simple beauty of living.

All too soon, though, the dance wound up. It was time for the tale-telling and Leaps felt his heart beating faster in his chest. The threesome took their seats amongst the other Sept members as Howls-of-the-World's-End, the sept's senior Galliard, stepped forward. A silence fell over the assembled sept as he cleared his throat.

"I thank Stag who loves us and Mannan who watches over this caern for so many of you coming home to us safe this day," he said. "And I thank mother Gaia for those of us who did not return and the lives that they lived."

And then he began to sing. His words carried Leaps-Like-the-Salmon back to the morning, to the nerves and bravado of the assembled packs. He could taste the excitement as they stepped sideways and made their way to the Refinery through the Otherworld. He recalled their exultation as the packs swept aside the Wyrmlings they encountered and gained access to the plant itself without loss.

And then he felt his stomach sink. He knew what came next. After they stepped sideways again. To his own astonishment, Leaps suddenly found himself on his feet, taking over the story from Howls-of-the-World's-End. The Galliard stepped aside to let the young Garou take his place. He knew even as Leaps spoke that the Theurge didn't have a tenth of the skill that the elder Garou had, but he had a thousand times the passion for the people whose deaths he was recounting. He wove a simple tale of courage and sacrifice, of Rends-the-Night seeing a group of Spirals trying to spring an attack from behind on the main body of the Garou. She led her pack in a headlong charge, crying out a warning howl, alerting the others as she did so.

Even as they changed, each and every one of the pack could see their deaths. There were too many of the Spirals for the four Garou to take on alone, but they didn't hesitate. Rends-the-Night tore into them, tearing the head off one even as he shredded her leg. Arms-Like-Trees was beside her in a second, furiously tearing at those attacking his alpha. Within heartbeats, Leaps-Like-the-Salmon and Daughter-of-Arduinna were by his side, Daughter swinging her klaive and Leaps calling upon the spirits to harry and confuse the Fallen Garou.

Their efforts were doomed. For every blow they landed, two fell on them. Rends-the-Night fell first, screaming her defiance even as her guts tumbled to the ground. Her death sent Arms-Like-Trees into a frenzy, ripping his way through her killers and more besides. Daughter-of-Arduinna was blindsided, and torn apart once she hit the ground. Leaps-Like-the-Salmon never saw Arms-Like-Trees die, as a blow to his head sent Leaps spinning backwards, his consciousness fading. When he recovered, the Spirals were dead. Another pack had left the main body of the Fianna to back up the Chosen of Cernunnos pack, but had arrived too late to save anyone but Leaps.

There was no time to mourn, though; the battle had to go on. Leaps-Like-the-Salmon joined the other Fianna, and plunged into the fight once more.

Howls-of-the-World's-End gripped Leaps-Like-the-Salmon's shoulder firmly as he seamlessly took over the tale. He told of the running battle through the corridors of the oil refinery, of the final confrontation with the Wyrm-twisted thing that lurked at its heart, their final triumph and its terrible cost, but Leaps-

Like-the-Salmon was no longer really listening. He was looking at Iona and Douglas, seeing the pride in his lover's eyes and the warring emotions of pride and misery painted all across her brother's face. Slowly, he began to understand what Greg had been trying to tell him. As the assembled sept howled its approval of the tale he and Howls-of-the-World's-End, told, he just stumbled back to the people that he loved.

As the howls rose around him, growing louder, more complex and richer, he hugged Iona, while looking Douglas in the eye. Douglas looked at him and nodded. And then, he turned and added his voice to the howl. The whole sept turned their faces to Sister Luna and howled their triumph and joy at being Fianna. Human voices mixed with wolf howls and the unmistakable sound of the Garou to create a symphony that spoke to the hearts of all of them. As the howls of triumph died away, a new chorus rose up from the assembled werewolves. This howl sang of pain, loneliness and loss. It sang of heroes dying as they were destined to die and the pain of those left behind. It spoke of torn flesh and freed spirit and of the joy and horror of battle.

As the howls slowly turned to the future, to ideas of safety and future victory, a single wolf detached itself from the group and padded its way slowly up the hill, still howling. The insistent rain trickled down his fur, giving him a sleek, determined appearance.

The howl died away into ragged, sobbing cries and Leaps-Like-the-Salmon shifted back to his human form and fell to the ground. He howled again, crying out to Gaia his pain at the loss of his pack. He lost all track of time, until he felt Iona's arms around him. She pulled him close and held him as he continued to cry, his tears mingling with the rain and pattering on the ground.

As his sobs began to die away, she turned him to face her. "I may not be Garou, but I am Fianna, and I know that no Fiann should face this alone," she whispered to him. "I know you hurt, but come back to us. Come back to the whole of your family. Come back into the warmth and feel again what your pack died to protect."

Hesitantly, he stood up, and slipped his arm around her waist. And then Rory "Leaps-Like-the-Salmon" McNabb and Iona McGregor made their way down the hill, into the light of the fire and the warmth of their tribe, their family.

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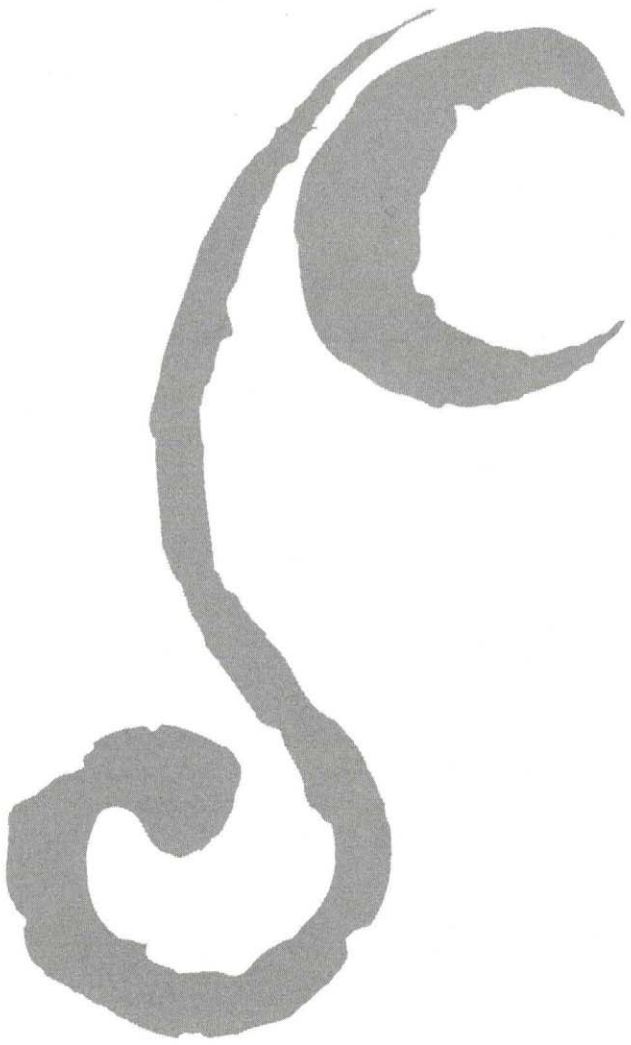

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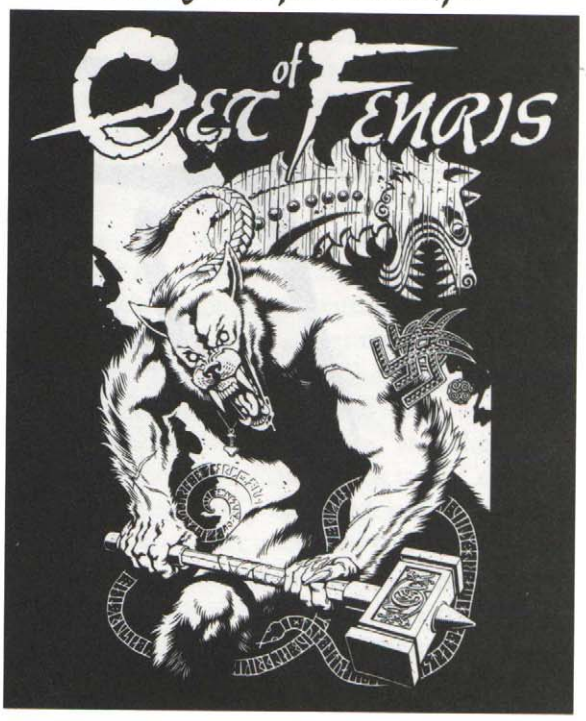

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Contents

Legends of the Garou: Family Values 1
Chapter One: The Song of Stag's Children (History) 12
Chapter Two: Hearth and Home, Caern and Kin (Society) 36
Chapter Three: Fang and Antler (Character Creation) 66
Chapter Four: The Wild and the Wise (Hero-Children of Stag) 86

"God reward you," said Goronwy, and he took up the stone and put it between himself and the blow. Then Lleu threw the spear and pierced both the stone and Goronwy; Goronwy's back was broken and he was killed. The stone still stands on the bank of Avon Gynvael in Ardudwy, with the spear through it, and it is called Llech Oronwy.

— "Math Son of Mathonwy," *The Mabinogion*

Well, the elders have placed you in my capable hands this evening, but they haven't left me with much time. My pack's leaving for Scotland on sept business tomorrow — no, you can't go, and don't interrupt your betters — and I'm to tell you the tale of the Fianna in one evening. No small task to condense a story that would take half a lifetime to relate into a few hours. But it's quiet, and your belly and my cup are both full.

Put down your pen; this isn't a lecture hall. You'd best start honing your memory now; you'll soon meet traditionalists who'd tear you a new one for trying to take notes. Our tales unfold in words, and words are better spoken than written. The spoken word is alive like a butterfly, energetic, beautiful and changing. Write the word down, and it gets pinned to the paper like the specimen on an entomologist's board. Some say the first writing put the Weaver on the road to ascendancy — but that's not what you came to hear, is it?

I'm turning out the lights, what does it look like? There's few tales that are better told in bright light. No hearth here for a fire, but some candles will do the trick. Besides, you won't be tempted to write anything down if you can't see the notebook. There, three candles, to represent your first triad. That's a memory trick we use, to group important information in threes. Remember, then, lad, the three candles that illumine every darkness: Knowledge, Truth, and Nature. The Knowledge, I'll give you this night. If I tell my story aright and you listen close, you'll hear Truth woven through the tale. If I do the tale justice, and you learn from it, that will sit well with my Nature as a Galliard and a Fianna. One swig... and on we go.

In Elder Days

Beginning

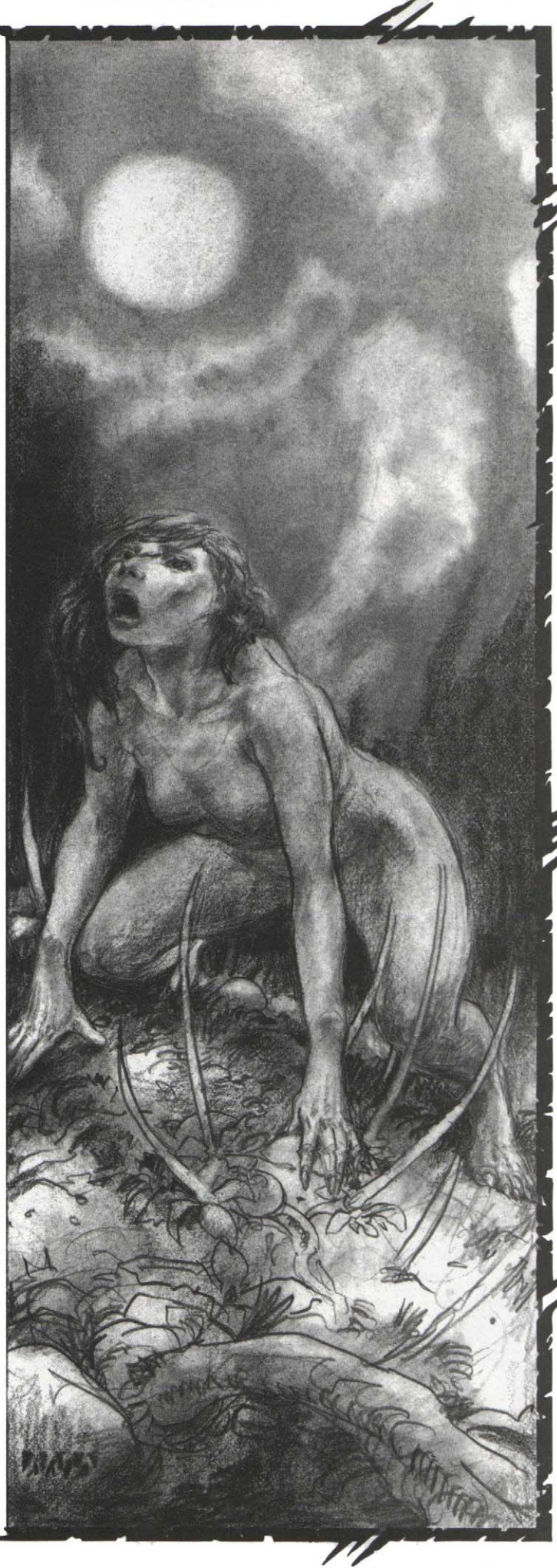
A tale should start at the beginning, but which one? Maybe you've heard a tale or two about how Gaia created our kind, but that's not the beginning of my tale. I'm thinking of a winter evening, one of many since man and wolf were joined in spirit. In a deep forest, a young werewolf howled to the gibbous moon; his howl was joy for the Mother of All; his howl was loneliness for a lost pack; his howl was lusty to echo the fierce life that beat in his chest. But there was one who walked the night who was drawn to the bittersweet song. It melted the ice of her heart and brought tears to her eyes; a sky-blue flower grew where each drop fell. She lifted her head and sang her own song; her song was longing for the fierce beauty she beheld; her song was sorrow for knowing the Garou's mortality; her song was joy for the promise in his voice and in his spirit. And he beheld the watcher, and his heart broke for her majesty, her beauty beyond all things. Their songs rose together, mingled, and the stars grew brighter in their beauty. Then she took the wolf-form, and they ran together, chasing the moon, and on the cusp of the morning they came together in their human forms. But when he awoke, she had vanished.

A full nine years and nine days passed before the Galliard laid eyes upon her again. She had twin children standing proudly beside her — an elfin girl of fine features, and a boy with a feral cast to his face. "Behold the fruits of our joining. My daughter shall reside with her kin in the lands that know no death, but I gift you with your son. May he live with your people and stoke the fires in their hearts against the all the cold winters to come. May the bond of blood between them wax strong in the coming ages." And then Danu, mother of the Tuatha de Danaan, took her daughter Fionna through the high air to Tir na nOg, leaving her son among his own kind. He was the first of our songkeepers, whose voice could shame the songbirds and make hope bloom in the darkness like roses in the snow. He was the first of our tribe.

So it was told to me. Mind you, the fire was ash and the sky was brightening before the elder ended his tale. I don't think you have the time or the attention span for me to do justice to it, so you got short version. Yes, of course there were faeries. Still are, just as there are werewolves. Let's move on.

Impergium

You've heard about the Impergium, I know; your Ragabash pal has a mouth after her mood: dark and expansive. I won't defend what we did at the dawn of



civilization. Thousands of years later, most of us think the Impergium was a bad idea. We werewolves were entrusted with keeping the humans safe, and we did this through control. We herded the humans, keeping them close so we could keep an eye on them; sometimes we culled the weak, and occasionally the uppity as well. The best we chose to breed with, and often raided other tribes' Kinfolk like our own Kin raided cattle.

We meddled in other ways as well. The first humans to discover smelting and smithing we brought before our righs to demonstrate what humanity had learned. Their fates rested on the attitudes of each individual sept. Some disdained the forgecraft, declaring it Weaver-tainted. Others saw danger in smithing, for if copper and bronze could be crafted into weapons, why not iron or even silver? Why would we want humans learning the ways of the forge when it could only strengthen them? Still, a few septs saw value in the new arts, and allowed the humans to make tools and weapons for us alone; these smiths alone did not face the claws of the Garou.

Our attitude changed somewhat as our tribe grew and collected more clans of Kinfolk. In a world of stone points, metal weapons were a great advantage; a tribe armed with stone will serve the metal-armed every time. Septs that once slew anyone carrying so much as a cast ingot of bronze now encouraged Kinfolk smiths to strengthen their people with blades and tools.

I wonder what our ancestors would say about the state of the world. I'm guessing they would have rethought the whole Concord. Oh, I wouldn't go around saying the Impergium should be reinstated—particularly not around any Kinfolk who know our history — but let's say I can look back to that time and say, "here's where things started going wrong for the world."

The Impergium officially ended with the Concord, but in reality it continued in for some time. Villages swelled, tribes left for unsettled lands, and eventually butted up against other villages. The result was conflict, skirmishes, raids, and conquest — fights we often instigated. Where once our packs descended on an opposing village, now we would hand a charismatic Kinfolk a fine sword or spear, sing tales of his ancestor's deed to stir his blood, and point him at the other village. Well-armed, his band had a better than even chance of victory, resulting in wealthier, healthier Kinfolk and fewer humans overall. Impergium-by-proxy. And if said Kinfolk decided to war against us for some reason, he and his little sword couldn't stand against a Gaian war machine. For werewolves, it was far too simple to dominate humans who were neither very numerous nor well-armed. It made us feel powerful, and fed our pride. And pride led to…

The War of Rage

The werewolves were the warriors of Gaia, and in our own minds we were the greatest of all the Changing Breeds. We were kings of the world, and made no secret of our right to rule human and Fera alike. The Fera had other ideas, of course; we didn't take too well to being snubbed, laughed at, or even ignored. In our pride, we found reasons to hate them. If they didn't follow the rightful kings of creation, they were rebels to be punished; if they didn't follow the champions of the Wyld, perhaps they followed the Wyrm. We took caerns or skirmished with them to put them in their place, yet were outraged when the Fera retaliated in kind. Escalation was inevitable as one breed after another found itself targeted. Any voice of reason was drowned out in howls of vengeance. In our madness, we left the hunt for the Wyrm to take up the hunt for our Changer cousins. The peaceful werebears, the proud werelions, the skulking wererats, even the playful wereotters fell beneath our claws. Soon even the peacemakers fell silent, for with so much blood already spilled, it was clear the Fera would never grant peace. Of course, the outcome of the war was inevitable. We fought in coordinated packs, which few Fera did. And though the tribes weren't particularly friendly to each other, they shared a unity the independent Fera couldn't or wouldn't emulate. Today, you won't meet a wereeagle, a wereox, a werespider or wereotter. The survivors — the Bastet and Mokolé chief among them — are scarce, and their bitterness can be lethal if they catch you alone, so be warned.

Thus did pride bring the First Great Sin against Gaia. To prove the Garou were supreme on the world, we eliminated our rivals, our equals. We tried to earn the right to rule, and instead we earned the right to stand alone against the waves of enemies that now break against us.

But there is one bright spot in this dark stain on our tribe's history: the Corax. We were closer to the wereravens than to any other Fera; we sheltered them, and in turn they alerted us to enemies and prey. In the heat of the War of Rage, even as we tore apart Bastet and Gurahl, our lands were a haven to the Corax, sometimes even when we discovered them spiriting away the occasional Fera and their Kinfolk. We trusted the Corax, and they haven't forgotten. Apart from the wereravens themselves, our "lapse" isn't commonly known, and that's just as well. I suspect many would secretly hold our small mercy against us — as if sparing one made our crimes against a score of others any less shameful.

Who's a Celt and Who Isn't?

Who were the Celts? There is no strict definition; for example, some tie it to various art forms, others to genetic stock. Currently, in most academic circles the term Celt is used to represent a general culture tied to a related group of languages. The Greeks referred to a northern people called the *Keltoi*, and Caesar called the tribes of central Gaul the *Celtae*. The Romantics of the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries resurrected the term to nostalgically describe a great empire of proud, artistic and fiercely independent tribes. Drawing from the Romantics, the modern New Age movement has painted them as in touch with all things spiritual.

Modern archeology is often at odds with these portrayals. The notion of a unified Celtic identity is questionable at best. For instance, it is unlikely that a Galatian would feel a bond with the Iceni of Britain, although she may feel more at home with customs or religious tradition than she would in Pompeii or Thebes. While sharing some cultural and linguistic ties, Celtic society was quite diverse; some Celts lived in small loosely arranged chieftainships, while others had economically mighty metropolises and a level of centralized organization equaling their Roman rivals. Unfortunately, unlike the prolific Greeks and Romans (and later, Christian monastics) the Celtic peoples rarely recorded their goings-on (the exception being the more organized of the Gaulic societies around the time of Roman expansion, and very few of their documents have survived). Therefore, most of what we know comes from rivals or enemies who wouldn't make the best character witnesses. Since then, many have attempted to shed light on their forebears, but some were more enthusiastic than scholarly while others were ruled by their political agendas. Only in the last century, and particularly in the last two decades, has archeology begun to advance beyond Romantic myths and political biases, providing a much clearer, though still quite incomplete, picture of these ancient peoples.

Scholars speak of two general Celtic cultures, each with similar but distinct technological and artistic styles. The earliest, Hallstatt, spanned the period from around 1200 to around 475 BCE. The next, known as La Tene, was the culture that Rome faced (Hallstatt and La Tene are the names of the principal archeological sites for the respective cultures). Worked items often sported a high degree of decoration, including intricate series of spirals and flowing lines, stylized faces and animals (the familiar Celtic knotwork is likely an invention of Christian monks), including motifs borrowed from neighboring cultures.

Until recently, it was accepted that the British Isles were invaded by successive waves of Celtic peoples; while some migration probably took place, it's more likely that preexisting social, religious and economic ties between the British Isles and the continent are responsible for the spread of La Tene culture. The cultural aspects of Celtic peoples under foreign occupation were understandably diluted over time; while some aspects and cultural traits are retained, places like Gaul and England are more of an amalgam of succeeding cultures than the outlying lands such as Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

To truly get a sense of these diverse peoples would require more space than we can afford, but in an over-generalized nutshell, here are a few notes based on archeology and contemporary sources. The Celts were philosophical, superstitious (like everyone else), fierce in battle but undisciplined. They loved to drink, and happily traded a slave for a jug of wine. They had a strong sense of honor, which didn't always fit with the codes of neighboring civilizations. Of their appearance they were vain, and were more apt to show their wealth by adornments than by grand houses. Knowledge and history was passed down through oral tradition.

Many Celtic resources are available, in print or on line. A little effort is necessary to parse the true historical evidence from the "mythic" Celts of romance — unless, of course, that's the sort of game you're shooting for. Nobody ever said that Garou society held truer to human history than human legend.

The Rise of Stag's Children

There were many tribes of humans, even in the ancient times. Some we watched. Perhaps we noticed that some watched us back. Who knows how our forebears chose Kin back then? Probably the boldest, the strongest, maybe even the wisest were joined to us. We grew together, the human and the werewolf; our blood fired theirs, bringing inspiration to their hearts and restlessness to their souls; they threw heart and soul into all they forged and crafted and birthed. Likewise, our wolf Kin were a breed apart from their cousins: large, strong, beautiful of voice and matchless in grace as they glided through the forests and plains. Soon, our Stag's Tribe spread across Europe.

You'll notice I've not yet called our ancestors Fianna; I've chosen my words carefully. One text written by the Warders of Men (who eventually became the Weaver-loving Glass Walkers) mentions "the nine-times-nine clans of Stag." A bit of an exaggeration, but certainly the tribe branched like the tines of Stag's antlers across Europe. With distance comes isolation. We've always been clannish, and eventually septs identified more with their local tribemates than with the tribe as a whole. Their names they took for themselves or were given by kin or foe.

Perhaps the greatest of these were the Hounds of the Horned One — don't growl, not all comparisons to dogs are insults — who reigned supreme across Gaul, but there were others; for example, high in the alpine regions lived the Skysingers, whose mingled howls were reckoned magnificent and without compare even in a tribe of singers. Then there were the Night Claws who prowled the hills and valleys in the Balkans and sometimes "forgot" the Impergium was over. And in the western isles lived those whom the humans euphemistically called Fierce Ones — the Fianna. No, they weren't named after Fionn mac Cumhail, though he was among the greatest of Kin — and I'm pleasantly surprised you've even heard the name, cub. I know you aren't well-versed in the Irish tongue yet, but surely you've noticed that the Garou word for Fierce sounds a bit Gaelic? That's the beauty of inventing your own language. And if the Gaels used our own words to describe us, so much the better. For that matter, "Garou" entered human ken through our Gallic Kin.

The Claiming of Eire

History is conquest; that's one of the biggest lessons for the chronicler. You take from someone, or someone takes from you. In the early days, we took and took, expanding in all directions, claiming new Kinfolk here, following our conquering Kinfolk there.

Stag's Children reached the western isles long before sword was first drawn from stone, when — no I'm not talking about King Arthur, I'm talking about the Bronze and Iron Ages. Anyway, our folk were there long before the so-called Celtic cultures arose. We're a territorial lot; if we hear the howls of a stranger in the distance, we get antsy and either drive them off, hunt them down or leave for greener pastures. And the pastures don't get much greener than the isle we now call Ireland. The scattered peoples of the isle had just settled down to farm, but the hunt was still in their blood. Among them we found worthy Kinfolk, though we did not rule as once we might have. It was in those days that we established septs of the TriSpiral and Silver Tara, the greatest of the caerns we still hold.

Here also we found the greatest of the fae who dwelt in this world. Mind you, they were like young gods in those days, beautiful and terrible — the Tuatha de Danaan, the tribe of Danu. By our bonds of blood, they welcomed us, though I suspect they relished the thought of the amusement we could provide. Don't assume that just because someone is your ally that you can trust him.

The Fomorians

But all was not fair on the Emerald Isle. We were no strangers to the Wyrm's taint, but here we encountered a sea-borne race beyond anything we had yet met. Called the Fomorians, these misshapen creatures swept across the island, taking horrible tributes during the dark half of each year (that's from Samhain to Beltane... oh, alright, unlearned pup, try Halloween and May Day, more or less). By the stories, they would demand every third child in every village, or steal the fertility from every third field so that nothing but thorns and stones would grow there. Sometimes they would simply sweep a swath of destruction across a corner of Ireland.

The lords of faerie were there before our kind ever set foot on the island. So why didn't they just come to grips with the Fomorians? Because the Fomorians were also called Fir Domann, the Men of Domnu. Domnu, so they say, was the dark sister of Danu, and the epitome of all things fell and evil. The Fomorians equaled, if not outmatched, the Children of Danu, and the faerie lords of Eire hated and feared them above all else. They called on our aid by invoking the blood ties between our tribe and theirs, though I imagine Stag's Children would have joined the fight in any case; we made the isles our territory, and we'd be damned if we let a race of Wyrm-blooded beasties have the run of the place. So the call went out to all our tribe, and when darkness fell and the Fomorians followed the frost to Eire, we fell upon them with claw, fang, Gift and glamour.

There's never been a war like it, pup. We pricked them but good, and it just pissed them off. They returned in force nine times as strong — hordes of misshapen warriors with dark magic and poisoned weapons. You'll hear tales of our battles with the Fomorians to last a thousand campfires. Ground soaked in blood marked the passage of battles. Packs threw themselves at the invaders, determined to win or die. Many, many did the latter before we got the former. When we thought the foe was on the verge of collapse, word would reach us of a raid in the Welsh lands or that a caern on the Thames was besieged.

Finally, on the Plain of Towers (known today as Moytura), all was decided in one titanic battle, which lasted from sunup to sundown. While the de Danaan wove their glamours and fought with spear and bow and

sling stone, we rolled in with claw and fang. Blood of faerie and werewolf alike painted the stones, pooled in bogs and soaked deep into the soil, charging the Umbra with death and war. There was no way of telling who would be the victor until just before the sun touched the horizon, when the Fomorians broke and fled for the shore. The survivors set sail for the west, never again to haunt our lands. Afterwards, both fae and Garou built great cairns as memorials to the fallen; we consecrated the site to become the Caern of the Red Plain. The cost of victory was dear, however; the best of a generation never saw the victory moots, and even the Tuatha de Danaan never fully recovered their strength. Before the next Age of Man arrived, the Tuatha de Danaan passed from the Dying Lands, bound for Tir na nOg in ships which sailed through the air as easily as on water. They left behind their own children. Still, an evil was erased from our lands, and our alliance with the fair folk was renewed; in the blood of birth it began, and in the blood of war it was strengthened.

Against the Fomori

Though the Fomorians were banished, we weren't out of the proverbial woods yet.

The Passing of the Tuatha de Danaan

When you're a songkeeper as long as I've been, you'll notice that most tales vary depending on who's doing the telling. Take the passing of the Tuatha de Danaan, for instance. There are those who insist the elder fae were so weakened after Moytura that they abandoned the Dying Lands (as they call our world) for Tir na nOg in order to recuperate. If that's the case, maybe we'll see them again one day. A more popular tale has the de Danaan driven out of this world by the arrival of iron-wielding tribes. I don't doubt their seers knew that iron was coming, but I don't reckon there were pitched battles between the great fae and human upstarts; I imagine the Tuatha were gone before the Iron Age hit British shores. If that's the case, the de Danaan are probably gone for good in this Weaver-infested realm where iron is above, below and all around.

I met a sidhe lorekeeper who related a stranger version of the tale. She said that the fates of the children of Danu and Domnu were entwined, and so long as one dwelt in this land, the other was bound there as well. By quitting our realm for good, then, the de Danaans were ensuring the Fomorians would never return. I don't know if I believe it or not, but it makes for an interesting story.

Our kind had been battling the Wyrm's minions in Europe since there were first Garou, but the evil corruption was well-entrenched when we arrived in Britain. The Wyrm had its hold in the dark places, in the secret places, and now and then it would rear its evil head. Sometimes, the Wyrm manifested as great dark beasts which the native peoples worshipped and appeased with human sacrifices (Cromh Cruach being one of the best known, but far from the only one, Gaia help us). Others were more insidious by far, for even in those days the Wyrm was learning its perverse subtlety. The Defiler Wyrm touched high- and low-born alike, tempted them with dreams of power, prosperity, revenge, lust... and possessed their souls and tainted their bodies. Oftentimes a glance couldn't distinguish their corrupted bodies from the unwholesome frames of the Fomorians, and soon — and forever after — we named the Wyrm's mortal minions after that most monstrous race.

Of course, as you'll find out soon enough, cub, the Wyrm's touch blights more than the soul; when it grows strong, it blights the body as well. And the Wyrm was not as subtle as it is today; taint could always be seen, in misshapen limbs, bent back, even a blemish. It was we who told the wise ones among our Kin what to look for. That is why they learned to carefully inspect their leaders for any physical blemish. That is why we do likewise, and it's this tradition that keeps metis from being trusted enough to assume the mantle of leadership in the Fianna. We are creatures of spirit, and a defect in the body marks a weakness in the soul, remember that.

But as I was saying, the fomori were numerous and formidable. Families, even whole clans had fallen. Even our own Kinfolk succumbed, although I wouldn't mention that openly — more than a few refuse to believe or admit that our own blood would strike against us. But winning through treachery and betrayal delights the Wyrm best of all. For promise of gold, of love, even of a prize bull a man (or woman!) would spill a secret, unbar a door, even wield a blade. Villages, fortresses, whole clans fell, and clansmen lay dead and broken on a hundred battlefields. Kinfolk betrayed their septs for power or vengeance, to have their own hopes betrayed by their dark master assuming our claws didn't finish them first.

But weakened though we were from battling the Fir Domnu, we still did what Gaia made us to do: eradicate the taint of the corrupted Wyrm. Gradually we drove back our defiled foes, burning their bodies to purify the taint. From bog to wood to mountain, from Eire to Cymru to Alba we drove the Bane-ridden into the fire, as we had driven the Fomorians to the sea. We truly conquered the western isles (would that our wild northern cousins were so thorough, but

that's for a later telling). For decades we fought a never-ending war against the Wyrm that looked every bit as unwinnable as our struggle today. And we won. You'll do well to remind your pack of that when hope fails them.

Settling In

You might think that's the end of the story, but then you probably grew up being spoon-fed tales in Hollywood packaging. Life isn't that neat. Our chief enemies were gone, although the Wyrm will always find a way inside the strongest walls. But there were other concerns. We helped our Kinfolk rebuild and renew, and mated with new arrivals from the mainland. And then there were the fae; when the Tuatha de Danaan sailed into the West, they left their children, who, though not as powerful, could be every bit as arrogant and quick to take offence. I won't deny that we skirmished with the White Howlers to the north on occasion. Didn't happen often, though; they were scrappers sure enough. The Howlers were a tribe of extremes: more savage then the Get and Furies put together, but with a deep understanding of the spirit world, and for that we respected them.

And now and then we even fought with each other. Not over territory, at least at first; there was land for the taking, land touched by no Man. But there were ideas and the need to dominate more than you can see. Sometimes I wish the wolf blood flowed more strongly in us; there'd be a lot less needless fighting. I'll give you an example: around 200 BC or thereabouts Eire experienced a new influx of tribes in the sparsely-populated northern reaches of the island; with them came their attendant Changing Kin, a branch of the Hounds of the Horned One. With them they brought many things, including wondrous art, Celtic metal-craft... and a multitude of iron weapons. There is a tale among our tribe that the fae gave humans knowledge of silver, the greatest means to wound us. Some storytellers add that werewolves wrested the secret of iron forging from spirits and passed them on to our Kin to exact a measure of retribution. Whether any of that is true, the two metals of doom and the willingness to use them caused a rift between the Changers and the Fae. Up to that time, iron was scarce on the island, and so was never an issue with the Fair Folk. The high king of Silver Tara, Amadir, forbade the use of the sidhe-bane among Garou, to which Cassivax, the leader of the newcomers, replied that he would wear an iron blade when he himself sat on the throne of the Fianna. The challenge thus made, a gathering of the two hosts met to decide the fate of the kingship. King and contender fought with words, blades and finally claws. In the end, the old ard righ fell and Cassivax took the high seat at Tara. If the Fair Folk were often difficult before, they were considerably more hostile now. Some three score of years would pass before Ard Righ Collam again forbade the use of cold iron and renewed the vows of friendship between Fianna and fae.

So a few centuries passed, and we grew strong in the British Isles. But don't make the mistake like so many other youngsters in thinking our tribe wasn't doing anything south of the Cliffs of Dover.

Strife on the Borders

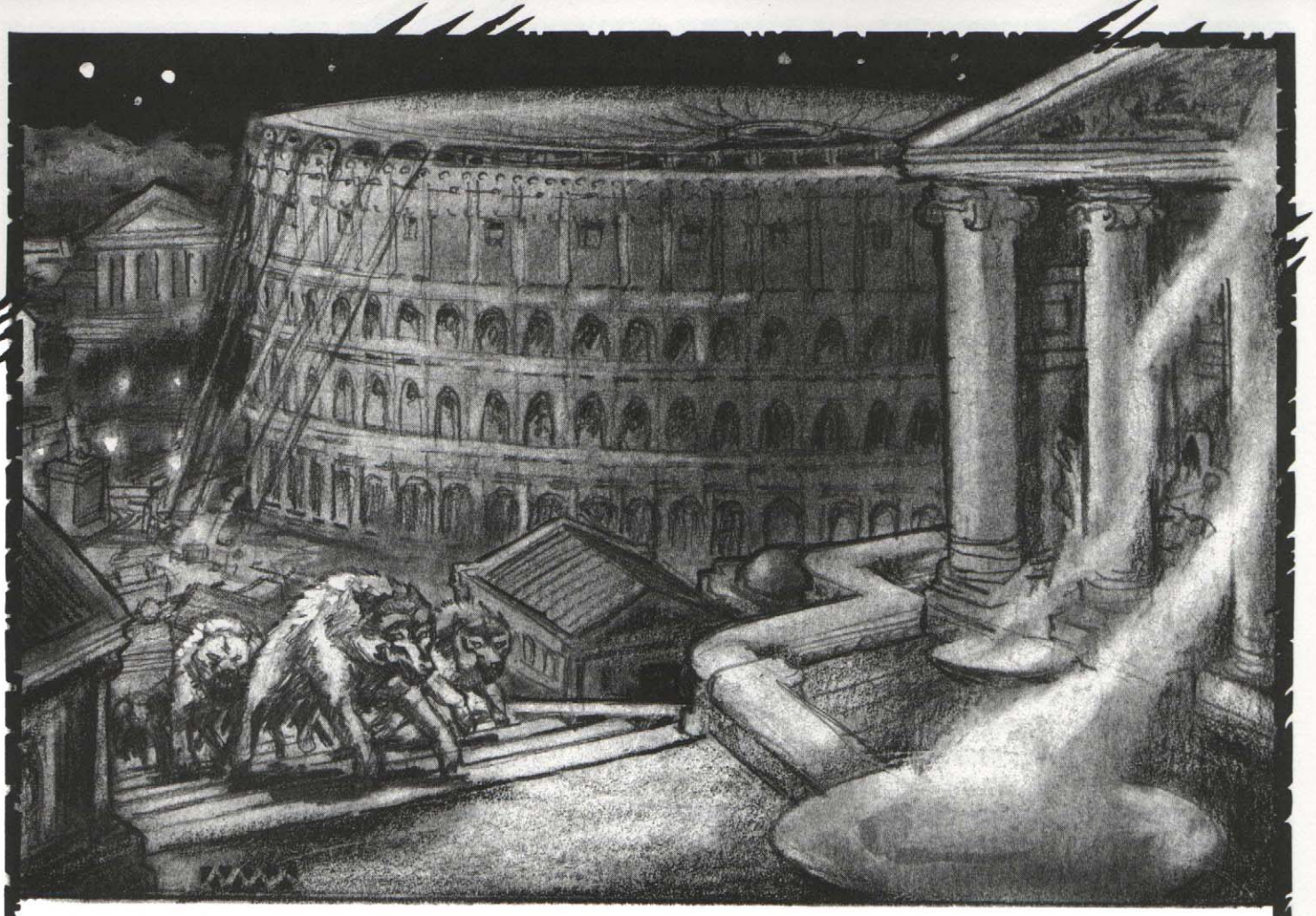
Nearly half a millennium before the birth of the Christ, our tribe was arguably the most powerful in Europe; certainly we had septs from one end of the continent to the other. And our Moon Dancers were welcomed by most tribes even then. But as we grew more populous, we began to look for new lands to guard. And if they already had Garou to protect them, well, we may or may not have moved on.

The Human Fianna

Our Kinfolk have always been dear to us; always will be. They've fought and died at our sides, tended our wounds after battle, shared their finest feasts and songs, and of course warmed our beds on cold winter nights. In the old days, Kinfolk formed war bands to help defend our caerns and to root out the Wyrm's evil. With honor they took our name as theirs; our Kin Fianna often took great risks for us, and more than a few gave their all in the defense of Gaia and their Garou brothers.

I'll hear no argument but that the greatest of these was Fionn mac Cumhail. The son of Cumhail was a warrior without peer, and fair dealing with enemy and friend. He protected human, wolf and Garou with cunning, skill, and his spear, guarding Silver Tara from foes both human and supernatural. When his band was brought low through treachery, we made sure the bastards suffered for it. His funeral lasted for days, and he was laid to rest in a green valley within sight of Silver Tara — no Kinfolk can hope for a greater honor. Even now his spirit guides our Theurges.

The bards have kept alive the names of the human Fianna... and they wove some of our own exploits into the legends as well. But the legacy of Fionn is not dead. Even now, bands of Kinfolk pledge their strength to the cause. Working in bands of three or nine (when the numbers can be spared), they form a worldwide network of soldiers and spies dedicated to aiding their Changing brothers at a moment's need.



We followed our Kin across the Danube into Macedonia, looking to claim caerns as our Kin claimed land and wealth. Unfortunately, greed overtook both werewolf and Kinfolk, and eventually a great army invaded the Greek lands, eager for the riches of Greek temples. Our skirmishes with Black Furies left us overconfident, and we set our sights on the great caern at Delphi. That was a grave and fatal error. The Furies used Gifts to turn us against each other and against our Kin, and spirit allies plagued the invaders with lightning and earthquake until they retreated, leaving tens of thousands slain on the field. For the surviving members of our tribe, the Furies set them with a geas to never again set foot south of the Danube. Imagine the pain they felt, watching their families continue westward, to be parted forever?

The Black Furies weren't the only ones who had, ah, territorial disputes with Stag's Children. The Fenrir were a pain in the Northern Europe. We pushed north across the Rhine, and they pushed back. After a few rounds of this, we settled down to our caerns and watched our rivals carefully. While our Kinfolk traded land for blood, we were both content to harbor a mutual dislike, trading raids into each other's territory. Nothing bigger than skirmishes for decades... until the Romans changed the balance of power in Europe.

The Rise of History

The Scourge that Was Rome

Rome. It was just a city, but even in its youth a shadow lay across it. Their treachery began with the very first meeting with our Celtic Kinfolk; Roman envoys sent to observe the fighting between Celt and Etruscan broke their neutrality by attacking and killing one of the Celtic chieftains. The Celts sent an embassy demanding justice against the envoy's family; instead, the envoy was promoted. The mortally insulted Celts charged down the Italian peninsula, smashing every military obstacle, then burned and pillaged the city of Rome and laid siege to its fortified capitol for several months. Finally, the Romans paid an enormous ransom of gold to buy off the attackers.

Garou prophets saw evil in the state of Rome, caught the merest glimpse of the devastation that city would wreak on Stag's Children. Inspired by the victory in the Fomori Wars a thousand years before, several tribal clans led their Gaulish Kin to root out the evil before it could flower. While the vengeful Gauls sacked and besieged, packs of Hounds, Skysingers and others scoured the city for Wyrm-taint. A few temples were cleansed, tainted humans were torn apart, and fierce Leeches felt the sun's kiss, though at the cost of much werewolf blood.

Tragically, our greatest opposition came not from Banes or Leeches, but from other Garou. The Warders of Men blocked us with words and weapons. They claimed the citizens of Rome and refused to let more perish at our hands. When we told them of the rot that festered within their city, the Warders insisted that it was for them to deal with, not outsiders. But while they bargained and negotiated with us, they were also acting against us. Suddenly, Rome gathered a great ransom to pay off the Gauls. Without the constant presence of their allies within the city walls, the Hounds couldn't remain undetected. We failed to crush the Roman scourge. We have cause to rue that failure.

The memory of their defeat spurred Rome to claw its way to power, transforming a small city-state to a vital republic and then to a bloated empire fed on conquest. The Romans were the soldiers of the Weaver; their military tactics were soullessly efficient and carried out with strict discipline. They followed up their conquests with laws and bureaucracy, tempting the conquered with Roman citizenship in return for service (usually assisting in the conquest of new lands). Roads allowed messages, troops and goods to travel faster and farther than ever before, and such innovations as aqueducts encouraged the growth of new cities. But the Wyrm was very close at hand; unchecked ambition, greed and brutality drew the Wyrm in all its manifestations. Popu-

A Cautionary Tale

I told them to stay where they were; they couldn't help Numantia, couldn't even save the Kinfolk who sought refuge before the legions came. Just beyond the siege fires, the blood drinkers watched, cloaked in shadows — together with their puppet centurions commanding an army 60,000 strong. Our gathered foes were far beyond our sept's abilities. Could they not see? The caern was far more important than all our Kinfolk, and a rash action in the heat of the moment would bring its doom.

Not that we were inactive; we did all I knew we could do. Our packs raided supply trains; we sent spirits of pain and hunger to afflict the foreign soldiers. And we watched from our mountain fastness as starvation hollowed faces and withered frames of lovers, friends, brothers. Some dared to call me a coward, or worse. They challenged my right to be Righ. I withstood challenges nearly every day for weeks, months. But I held them back.

Then starving Numantia broke. The screams of the women, the blood that reddened the Duero, the fires the looters set were more than my septmates could bear. With howls of rage, they forsook their duty to Gaia to assuage the pain in their hearts. As did I, for what is a Righ without his sept? So we all bore down upon our blood-foes, and fell upon spears of bright steel, and were swallowed up by shadows. Numantia was razed, and her survivors were hauled off to live their lives in slavery... and our caern stood silent, unguarded, slowly dying of neglect.

Let it be a lesson to you, proud Fianna: master the passion in your heart, and it may save you; let your passion master you, and it will be your doom.

— Spirit of Egnato Master-of-the-Gale

Vercingetorix

Though many Celtic leaders resisted the Roman advance, one of the greatest threats Caesar faced was Vercingetorix of the Averni, a brilliant leader who united the resisting tribes of northern Gaul. A practical strategist, he avoided hopeless pitched battles in favor of ambushes and sabotage. Coldly calculating and ruthless, he advocated razing any non-defensible village, including those of allies. The Gauls worried at the Romans until Caesar's army, in an effort to corner Vercingetorix, was itself surrounded and savaged. For the first time, Caesar left the field of battle to the enemy, and he left seven hundred Roman soldiers on that field. Evidence suggests the disheartened leader was ready to quit Gaul for good.

But the Celts' characteristic lack of discipline pulled defeat from the jaws of victory. Flushed with success, the warriors made to crush the Romans once and for all against Vercingetorix's orders. Unable to smash through the legionnaires' shield wall, they lost heart and melted away, leaving their dead in heaps on the field.

Vercingetorix drew the remains of his army behind the wall of the city of Alesia. Unwilling to risk a final battle, Caesar instead began an epic siege. He built two elaborate fortifications, each between 10 and 13 miles long, to encircle the city; the first was a series of walls and pits facing inwards to hem in the city's defenders, the second a similar system facing outwards to defend against Vercingetorix's allies. Time dragged on; as the besieged grew desperate with hunger, they sent the women and children of Alesia out of the city to be taken by the Romans. The Romans would not allow them through the walls, and so they languished and died between the two armies.

Soon after, a relief force ferociously attacked the Romans, and was barely but bloodily repulsed. Hopeless, defeated, Vercingetorix surrendered to Caesar, who showed off his prisoner for six years before ending the Averni prince's humiliation by ritual strangulation.

lations were brutalized to "encourage" cooperation and subservience, holy sites were defiled to crush the spirituality that Rome couldn't control and use to its own ends.

We fought the corruption even as our Kin fought the legions. But for the most part we were alone in our struggle. Unlike in the Fomori Wars when the White Howlers sometimes assisted us, we never could coordinate with the southern Fenrir. (And why should we have? Prior to the Roman assault we were tearing into each other on a regular basis.)

Our Kin from Galatia to Iberia were brought under Roman rule. To make matters worse, the Warders of Men settled in our old territories, encouraging great cities populated with *our* old Kinfolk, now kept as Warder breeding stock. I guess the Silver Fangs felt Rome was now important enough for their attention, because they moved in and set up shop. But even this tribe of kings couldn't break the Wyrm's power. With two tribes of Garou at the heart of the Empire, you'd think they'd have some effect. Sometimes I wonder how much they really tried. But that's just sour grapes, I suppose.

I hate to say it, but there was little we could do. Only the savage fury of the White Howlers could halt the advance in the north — they had no scruples about joining their Kinfolk in descending on the Roman vanguard. And while you'll hear most Moon Dancers say the Irish Fianna were strong enough for them to look elsewhere, I suspect the island didn't look that appealing to Rome, and not worth the effort.

Still, Stag's Children didn't just show their throats. We continued to fight! Romans feared the hinterlands beyond their forts and their towns. Patrols went missing, supplies were spoiled, messages to advance were garbled into calls for retreat. But open warfare was beyond us.

Oh, you think you know something we don't, lad? A pack is worth a hundred men, you say? I'll grant that a Crinos is the match of half a dozen at least, especially with the Delirium at least partially making up for a legionnaire's armor. But like I said when your mind was wandering, the Romans were the best equipped, most disciplined fighting men of the age, and all your young Rage couldn't stand up to an army like that. But that's not the worst of their power. The generals didn't have to hurt you by putting steel in your belly; they could do it by crushing your human family, leaving desolation and rotting corpses in their wake. Under Julius Caesar's command, hundreds of villages and towns were razed, and millions were killed or enslaved. Millions! What was the lesson here, cub? What are you without your family? Our first duty is to Gaia and Her caerns, but without our Kin we are doomed to fail.

The Tribe Unites

Romans from the south, Germanic tribes from the north and east... we were vulnerable to more than human depredations on our Kinfolk. Fenrir were making more determined raids to test our Danube septs; Shadow Lords hungrily circled Night Claws strongholds in the Balkans, absorbing caerns and sometimes sept members; and the Silver Fangs and their lackeys "liberated" beleaguered caerns in Gaul. Europe was awash in enemies, swirling around our Stag's caerns like a torrent. With alarming frequency, septs would disappear beneath the flood.

The Hounds of the Horned One, the Gaulish branch of Stag's Children, fought as best they could. Trouble was, the worst enemies were either well hidden or well protected. When scouts discovered Roman soldiers sacrificing Gaulish slaves at a temple to a demon (who turned out to be a vampire using the cult for free food), the Hounds gathered a great pack to deal with the evil. Led by the son of the King of the Hounds, they did so, killing every Roman at the temple and scattering the foul monster's ashes on the morning breeze. But all was not as they had left it. The Sept of the Nine Hills, the Hound king's seat of power, was attacked, but by what no one knows. Almost certainly it was some great Wyrm beast; the king and his retainers were ripped apart down to the last pup, the caern totem was slain and the caern was tainted beyond cleansing. The return-

The Hibernization of the Tribe

You'll be asking, how did a tribe so diverse wind up with the name of its Irish branch? Because that's the branch that never had to share its lands. That's not to say that there aren't Fianna in Germany or France or Spain, but by no stretch of the imagination do we hold those lands as once we did. The greatest of our ancestral lands we still hold undisputed is Ireland. Small it may be, but that made it all the easier for us to hold it.

With the pressures of Rome's Wyrmish pawns, plus territorial encroachment by other tribes, we gradually gave ground. Septs fell or were scattered; the proud clans of our tribe gradually lost influence and — for most — even their identity. Soon the strongest voices for the tribe came from the British Isles, and the loudest of them were the Fianna of Ireland. In later centuries, the British werewolves once again moved into continental Europe and eventually to anywhere the British Empire touched. And when conquest, draconian laws and famine sent waves of Irishmen (among others) to American, Europe, Australia and colonies across the globe, the Fianna followed, bringing our ways and our name. Sure, the majority of Stag's tribe can claim descent from one or another of the ancient subtribes, and some that fairly bristle at being "lumped in" with the Fianna. But by and large, when a Garou hails a child of Stag, he calls him "Fianna."

ing warriors were still in bewildered grief when word reached them of two other caerns likewise defiled. Cinvortrix, the heir to the dead king, gathered his followers about him and headed west. Eventually they reached Silver Tara, where at first the Fianna welcomed them with great hospitality. But Cinvortrix soon demanded to be treated as a high king, for his people, though shattered and worn, still held more lands than the Fierce Ones of the Isles. So it came down to a challenge between Cinvortrix and Ard Righ Elim, "of the Red Claws." It's said the fight lasted for hours with not so much as a pause between the circling, snapping opponents. In the end, Elim was the last one standing and, matted with blood which flowed from countless wounds, he made Cinvortrix's followers proclaim him high king over all of Stag's Children. He took Cinvortrix's sister and had had several children by her to cement his new claim, although that shrew turned out to be more trouble than she was worth by any stretch... but that's for another night.

And that's the tale of how all the Fianna were united under one High King. Of course, don't go assuming that the remaining branches of Stag's Tribe paid much notice at the time, or that even the continental septs of the Hounds did homage. But in the years to come, aid from the British Isles bolstered the flagging continentals, giving them a higher opinion of their brothers from the isles.

Fall of a Tribe

Though tribes were absorbed piecemeal into the Roman world, though stone-paved roads spread across Britain like cracks on pavement, we were undefeated. Save for the northern half of the island, Britain was all ours. It was a long, hard fight, for the Wyrm was quick to exploit where the legions trampled, but certainly we held our own. But the constant struggle distracted us from our northern neighbors. Hell, as bloodthirsty as they were, Lion's Children had no *interest* in leaving their gloomy moors and windswept highlands, so once we were settled in we never had to worry about them coveting our caerns. While we struggled with our Mediterranean foes, we heard nothing of the battles the Howlers were fighting... and losing. The raven folk warned us that something was up, but we didn't believe them until they were knocking on Tara's door. Damn, it's a depressing chapter in the history of the Garou; we allowed this to happen, and we're paying for it still. We curse the rise of the Black Spiral Dancers. We hate them above all others for what they are: an affront to Gaia and a mockery of the Garou Nation. But we mourn them for what they were: our brothers. Grumpy, sullen brothers, true, but they howled at our moots, drank in our halls, and stood by our side with claws and blades bathed in red blood and black ichor. Many of our tribe call the Spirals "Wyrm Howlers" to remind ourselves of who they were — fierce brothers — and who they are — our chief foes. When given a choice of targets, Fianna will always choose to strike the Fallen Garou.

Unlikely Alliance

Despite what many think, only a small portion of a people are Kinfolk. That goes for the Fenrir and their Saxons, and the Spirals and their Picts. You'll hear some camps in our tribe that say we used to rule the Celts, giving them everything they have and making them do what we bid. When they unload that bullcrap, you can tell them about the time we had to hustle to catch up to the humans.

It was in the time that the empire was beginning to ebb just a mite. An empire built on conquest must continue to grow or it begins to consume itself from within, and they'd run out of rich, fertile lands to conquer. The Empire in Britannia was getting picked at from three sides; trouble kept them on their toes north of Hadrian's wall; raiders from Eire were raiding up and down the west coast; and Saxons in the east were restless. Then, the unprecedented happened. A secret war council gathered under three banners, so secret that none save perhaps the ravenfolk noticed (and they didn't tell us until battle commenced). Three enemies decided they had a greater foe, and united in the goal to drive the Roman scourge from Britain once and for all. From the north, the Picts smashed through Hadrian's Wall and charged southward. The Irish joined their British brethren and marched eastward. The Saxons attacked from the eastern shores.

Highlanders, by Gaia!

The Fianna who campaigned their way through Scotland were a bold lot. For centuries, they pressed on, slowly regaining lost caerns and killing the Fallen tribe and the more tainted of their Kin. No one can deny the conquering packs deserved to hold the lands they took, not even the Silver Fangs (with one or two exceptions, as usual). They came to a harsher climate than in the southern Fianna territories, lightly settled by stoic descendants of Irish settlers (Kin among them) and isolated from the comings and goings of the rest of Europe (other Garou among them). These hardy Fianna turned inward, relying on themselves, handling their own problems and paying little attention to the mandates of Tara. In many ways the Highlander Fianna have a brotherhood reminiscent of the ancient subtribes of Stag's Children. Even in modern times, some among the Highlanders have that air of superiority commonly perceived among the Get of Fenris. But when they leave their windswept caerns and come down from the highlands, there are none who better earn the moniker "Fierce Ones."

We even had Kinfolk among the armies, which should teach you to never assume you know what the Kin are up to. Word reached Tara as the war parties massed and struck. Taking this as a great opportunity, we sent packs in behind to do some hunting of our own. As they had in Rome centuries before, the Fianna scoured London and the surrounding countryside for any Wyrm-taint, be it in hidden temples, Leech-filled cellars, or Bane-ridden Romans. And by and large they were more successful this time. Each of the packs went home to their caerns in triumph, leaving their Kinfolk to gather the spoils. Unfortunately, Rome was quite stubborn, and within the year reinforcements arrived to end the "uprising" and return Imperial rule to Britannia. With them came the House Conquering Claw of the Silver Fangs, eager to quell dissention and bring stability to our "backwater province." They did so by laying claim to leadership of several our southeastern caerns as well as a few of the choicest Kinfolk families. After that, the Fangs kept a closer eye on our activities in Britain; whenever we got in a fight with the Romans or each other, it felt like Dad yelling, "Settle down, don't make me come up there!"

The alliance never reformed, and most historians say it was a coincidence that the three attacked more or less simultaneously — "a good year to kick Rome's arse," as my mentor would say. But we know better, we remember. It's good to be Fianna.

Empire's Collapse and the Dark Ages

Time passed, and the Wyrm's corruption gnawed at the empire. Like a termite-ridden house, the empire crumbled from within. And as the Roman tide ebbed, we were confident the Wyrm would soon have nowhere to hide. We smashed blasphemous temples and burned corrupted villas; from Eire we mounted campaigns to take back the tainted caerns of the Black Spirals. The Britons who had embraced all things Roman we hoped to bring back to the old ways. We aimed to clean up Britain the way we had Eire, and given time we could have.

We hadn't counted on the new distraction from the east. See, some of the British lords invited Saxons over to guard the coast from raiders. They told their relatives what a wonderful place it was, and the rush was on. Now that the eagle of Rome was no longer breathing down their necks, the Fenrir decided that we weren't doing our job. So they joined their Kin, attacking caern after caern, pushing us westward. We didn't lose all our caerns in the heartland — we even won a few back — but the battles kept us busy.

The local Fangs tried their best to stop the fighting. Trouble was, there were never that many of them to begin (with Britannia being seen as a backwater), and several of them died heroically (of course) in the final battles to crush the Black Spirals and their Wyrmish allies. Eventually, the disputes over territory subsided... for the most part, anyway. Like it or not, much of Britain became England — the land of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes. After a few hundred years of fighting the Wyrm side by side, a certain grudging respect arose between septs of the two tribes. A handful of caerns even supported mixed septs. Then the second wave of Fenrir swept in from Scandinavia, starting a new round of intertribal conflict. They "claimed" a few more caerns along the coast of Scotland, helped themselves to more of England and were generally a nuisance in Brittany and our few Gaulish holdings. The Isle of Man was a downright battleground for a number of years before they settled an uneasy truce with us. They even had the gall to land in Ireland. Not one caern did the bastards take, though; we sent the survivors limping home, and kept their Kinfolk as (unknowing) hostages to ensure they never again touched our greenest of shores.

The "Dark Ages" and Christianity

The so-called Dark Ages — an absurd term coined by fools who idolized Rome's power. The fall of Rome was a blessing to us, for the Wyrm's minions no longer had far-ranging support. When we tried to kill a corrupt Roman commander, the province was declared in revolt and legions descended, leaving slaughter, slavery and famine in their wake. To kill an isolated warlord had far fewer repercussions.

Even as it retreated, Rome struck again, but instead of an eagle their standard was the cross. It started out quietly, with no hint of the power it would wield during the Burning Times. Missionaries began to spread even as the Empire cracked and crumbled.

Still, the early Christians in the Isles were a diverse lot; some worked local beliefs in to fit Christianity, while others worked Christianity in to fit local beliefs. St. Patrick fought the old order, though not as much as the stories relate. Eventually, the Roman church took notice and asserted its own view of things. As the years passed the native Christianity faded before the harsher, more rigid Church of Rome.

But we owe the monks of the Celtic lands a debt, for keeping something of the Celtic culture alive for the humans. They wrote down many of the old tales — somewhat sanitized and Christianized, of course — and for that we're thankful. If it hadn't been for the monks in our far-flung corner of the world, a great deal of ancient learning — including the precious few extant stories of heroes like Fionn Mac Cumhail — would not be known outside caern or rath. And if you can gaze on the artistry of the Book of Kells and not be moved, well, there's no art in your soul.

The Middle Ages

Some of the Get of Fenris' Kinfolk decided they liked the French countryside, and settled down. The Silver Fangs decided they were a worthy sort, and co-opted them from the Get (See? The Fangs aren't all bad). Some years down the road, those northmen became Normans, hungry for land and power (which in those days amounted to more or less the same thing). The Normans spent years fighting amongst each other, until they decided they'd practiced enough and were ready to take on the world. And one of the early conquests was our Isles. The English put up a good fight, but the rapacious Normans conquered the lands from the Saxons who stole it a few centuries prior. Unpleasant folks, the Normans, but they eventually learned which hamlets the taxman wasn't to visit, which royal forests even royalty dared not enter.

The conquerors hardly stopped for breath after crushing the English resistance before they began coveting more territory. The lowland of Wales fell into Norman hands early on, and within a century a new generation of conquerors were sailing across the Irish Sea to make their fortunes. They weren't really a problem at first, for many of them went native, taking the customs of the locals. But then King Henry laid claim to the island, and things got tense. We knew that among the Normans stood Silver Fangs, and they were as covetous and proud as their Kin. Some Fianna spoke of war to defend our Isle, which alone of all the Fianna lands had suffered no banner of a Garou invader.

Silver Tara had an unexpected delegation of Silver Fangs. When they left, they vowed that no Silver Fang would claim a caern in Ireland. In return, the ard righ swore that the Fianna would stay out of human politics, letting their Norman Kin do as they pleased.

Was that a mistake? It kept the Fangs from claiming Eire as they'd claimed so much territory, and Lords of the Garou or not, if they had set their sights on Ireland it would have cost them dearly. But could we have stopped them from assuming leadership over any caern they wanted to, stopped them from claiming our Kin anywhere in Fianna territory? Understand, cub, they weren't as decadent back then. Like any good alpha, they had more than tradition on their side, they had genuine might to back up their claim to kingship. A good many of our folk have cursed the high king for knuckling under, but I'll not hear your voice among them. You'll learn respect for your elders, even if you don't agree with them. Still, even then it wasn't a popular decision. Our brothers in Brittany were less than pleased, for Fang "protection" had cost them most of their caerns. Fang Kinfolk spread across our lands, across England, the lowlands of Wales and Scotland, and even the heart of Ireland.

The Passing of the Sidhe

The Middle Ages brought many changes, but few so affected us as the passing of our ancient allies, the sidhe. Long had we watched as Faerie drifted further from this world; the sidhe grew more distant, their halls more difficult to find in the mists which separated the Faerie realms from our own. The low fae (and never call them that to their faces) — trolls, sprites and goblins of all kinds – were still pretty common, but the high fae crossed our paths more and more rarely with each passing decade. Not that it was all bad, for they always were an unpredictable and volatile lot.

I don't know why it happened. Perhaps it was the Church's fault, or maybe the sudden and massive death toll wrought by war, plague and famine in the mid-1300s. Perhaps it was the result of a violent rift between the Faerie Courts themselves. All of a sudden, the spirit paths between the worlds started collapsing. Faerie power drained from the world, just like someone pulled the plug in a bathtub. Once-fearless fae lords scampered to the crumbling portals, leaving behind most their subjects to suffer in the new world like beached fish gasping and flopping. But the oaths we swore with the sidhe we applied to their subjects, many of whom found refuge within our halls and our bawns, right up to Tara itself. Some foolish fae continued to war with each other even as they struggled for survival. We aren't the most patient of creatures, we Garou, and finally we told them to make nice or we'd withdraw our hospitality. That shook them up enough to meet on the hill at Tara and work out a truce. Who says we can't be diplomatic?

Modern Times

In the last five centuries, the changes in our world have picked up steam. The so-called "modern age" started off poorly for us, and it's been a downhill slide by and large... but the news hasn't been all bad.

Disasters

Cromwell

Depending on whom you talk to, Oliver Cromwell is a great hero or the greatest of villains. He did the Fianna nothing but wrongs, and for that we curse his name. He saw our stronghold nations as "confused" at best and backward savages at worst, and set about to bring them around to the proper ways.

The Litany commands that "the Veil shall not be lifted," but it's damned easy to forget that when your Kinfolk are dying. For the most part we worked in secret, hiding our Kin when we could and fighting the Banes and were drawn to battle and suffering.

Troops patrolling too near our caerns vanished, and spirits of pain and disease did their part to thin the

enemy's ranks. It wasn't enough to break Cromwell's resolve, however. In fact, our efforts sometimes backfired; at the siege of Drogheda, one pack disregarded the Veil while defending some Kin, and the Delirium-maddened soldiers massacred most of the town's civilians.

Once Ireland was brought to heel, Cromwell deemed the entire nation as traitors. The native Irish were given a choice: Hell, or Connaught. Those who chose the latter were driven to the poor western province of the island. Others were exiled or sent to the West Indies as virtual slaves. The rest ended up in shallow graves or raven-picked piles of bones. Over half of Ireland was given to Cromwell's soldiers or aligned settlers, ensuring centuries of increased turmoil on the island.

With Ireland taken care of, the English turned their attention to breaking resistance in Scotland. It was bloody, though not so bad as Ireland got it. At any rate, it was about that time we got too occupied to worry about Cromwell.

Second Battle of Tara

While Cromwell campaigned in Ireland, others followed him seeking to deal a telling blow against the werewolves which "infested" the land. A farmer known to truck with the beasts — which is to say, Kin — was captured, tortured and his family threatened. Broken at last, he agreed to guide his captors to the gates of Tara.

Early one morning, a small army drew up before the citadel. Were they Cromwell's soldiers, the Fianna would have had no problem dealing with them. But though their dress appeared that of English soldiery, their armament certainly was not. In their hands were flintlocks finer than the heavy matchlocks of the New Model Army; their brace of cannon lobbed exploding shells — an advance unknown at the time — over the walls. Fiann who pressed through the withering hail of shot faced swords that burned like silver. Several packs spit themselves on enemy pikes or fell to the leaden hail before several Fianna stepped from the Umbra into the midst of the soldiers. Thus beset, the invaders were vulnerable to the spears, arrows and stones that thinned their ranks until finally the soldiers broke. A countercharge from Tara turned retreat into rout, and then into slaughter. Few of the foes escaped the field, and the rest never asked for quarter — as if the Fianna would have given it, with their blood up. To this day, the Fianna know little of their attackers, save that they were more than simple soldiers. Some of their trophied swords and armor decorate the North Hall. The traitor received a traitor's death at a Fiann's hand, and his name was forgotten.

Silver Treachery

The lord of the local Silver Fangs in the Scottish Lowlands demanded our help in preparing for a Black Spiral Dancer incursion which one of his Theurges had foreseen. We'd seen no substantial presence of Spirals in the Isles for centuries; besides that, we were busy keeping the English soldiers out of our bawns and away from our Kin. So we told them to show us the enemy and we'd fight, but to leave us alone until then. They demanded the same thing from a sept of Get, with a less civil response. But the Fang King wasn't one to take no for an answer; he pulled out one of our oldest fetishes, the Silver Crown. The power of the Crown compels obedience, and the King intended to be obeyed. The Fenrir leader, impossibly, resisted the call of the Crown; drunk with power and enraged at the defiance, the Fang drove his klaive through the old warrior's stubborn heart. The Fianna righ was a little wiser; he knew he couldn't fight the royal power of the mighty artifact, and agreed to supply an outrageous force of defenders to the king's levy. When beyond the walls of the Fang's court, however, he shook off the command and returned to prepare his own septs for battle — against the tyrannical Silver Fang king. When the Fangs came looking for the promised army, they found it arrayed against them. What followed was a brutal struggle of vengeance and righteous wrath, as Get and Fianna battled Silver Fangs. The Fangs were strong, and they were many; in the end, key septs of the Fianna and Fangs were devastated, and the Fenrir were in no great shape either. I understand one of the wiser of the Fangs found a way to deprive his king of the Crown, momentarily returning sanity to him. There was hardly time for the tribes to go home to lick their wounds when the Spirals arrived in droves from the continent. Neither Fianna nor Fang could withstand the onslaught in their weakened state; Spirals captured and defiled caerns of both tribes. This was the invasion the seers foretold, and the arrogant Silver Fang brought it to pass. To this day we face the repercussions of the attack, for the Fallen tribe's presence is yet to be cleansed from the Isles. It's with some hollow satisfaction I relate that House Winter Snow of the Silver Fangs is no more, disgraced and forever stricken from the roles of heroes. The remnants of Winter Snow died slowly, and as they dwindled we "stepped in" to keep the caerns from harm. By the 18th century, we were again dominant in England, with the Get of Fenris a close second (mostly in the north and east); Silver Fang control was confined to just a couple caerns, and they were lucky to have those. It was after Winter Snow's treachery that something amazing happened: we began to work more closely with the English Fenrir, even to the point of having one or two mixed septs. It was a necessity, weakened as we were by our losses.

United, They Fell

The lands where we were strongest never cared to have someone else's king over them (especially when the English king was German, for Gaia's sake). So they continually pestered their overlords, including inviting England's enemies to land armies and attempt to overthrow the government. England decided lasting peace could be achieved by consolidating the islands under its rule. Where once they tried to do so with swords, now they used legalities, politics and economics, forcing the Scottish Parliament to sign away the national independence of Scotland in 1707. That didn't stop unrest, however; twice the Scots rose against their southern neighbor in an effort to install a new, hopefully pro-Scotland king on the English throne. The second rebellion in 1745 gave a taste of victory before the crushing defeat at Culloden the following year. The victors were quite harsh, destroying farms, killing, jailing or selling Scotsmen into slavery. The Highlanders could no longer carry swords or shields, use bagpipes or even wear their clan tartans. Worst of all, they banned the Gaelic tongue (although I imagine that would be hard to enforce outside of a Redcoat's earshot).

Shortly after, Ireland (with French backing) rose in 1798, only to be crushed brutally and forced into another Act of Union. They weren't treated quite as brutally as were the Scots — though harsh enough — which I attribute to the Irish merely wanting independence rather than a new king.

We lost a number of Kinfolk in those struggles, and the aftermath only made things more difficult for the Fianna — imagine suddenly not being able to tote your favorite fetishes in view without attracting unwelcome military attention. Ah... well, I take your point; I suppose we were somewhat spoiled at the time. Well, worst of all, from a Moon Dancer's perspective anyway, was the weakening of cultural ties as the British government tried to assimilate the more "troublesome" members of its newly United Kingdom.

Reversals of Fortune

Our presence on the Continent seesawed for nearly two millennia since the Roman conquests, but we never even approached the territories of old. Get, Lords, Warders, Children, even Gnawers — they all had what we once held. And of course, sitting at the top of the heap were the Silver Fangs. During the Middle Ages we managed to increase our numbers, though we regained very few caerns.

Then our fortunes in our old Gallic territories changed considerably. First came the Reign of Terror, which shattered the French Silver Fangs. Almost overnight their powerful Kinfolk and all the nobility that surrounded

them became hunted, reviled or just plain dead. In the ensuing madness, the French Garou were faced with the hopeless task of saving their beloved Kin and fighting the Banes which swarmed to feed (and feed on) the paranoia, fear and hate that fairly thrummed in city and countryside. More than a few Fianna crossed the channel to "protect" some of the same caerns the Fangs had "protected" centuries before. Our tribe believes in paying our debts. Before sufficient stability returned for the Fangs to "thank" us as they intended, Napoleon wrested control of France and incited what would become known as the Napoleonic Wars. That little bout of chaos kept all the tribes busy, guarding caerns from marauding armies and opportunistic minions of the Wyrm. Since our Kinfolk tended to wind up on the other side of the field from "The Little Corporal's" finest, we would come in behind the army to look for our own adversaries. The Whispering Rovers even gave our Kinfolk intelligence on the French while searching for Wyrmish threats. Underdefended septs were often happy for reinforcements to guard the caerns against military incursion, even if they weren't always happy that a rival tribe was providing the support. So at the end of all that, we had gained a handful of caerns in Spain and France. And soon our attention turned westward.

Industrial Revolution

Factories sprang up everywhere filled with machines, which needed to be tended day and night. People fed the machines with wood stripped from hillsides, and metal and coal ripped from the ground. Oils, first from the rendered fat of whales and birds, and later pumped from deep underground, also kept the thirsty mechanisms running. They birthed more machines, lights to disrupt the cycle of night and day, telegraph lines and electric cables to bind cities together, trains and other contrivances to reach the inaccessible places of the world, and weapons to conquer those they found there. And just as the Wyrm is wrapped up in the Weaver's web, the foulness of corruption thrived in the new industries. Where once the Wyrm's draconic minions blasted the landscape, now soot and chemicals killed the countryside even more effectively. And to these poisonous places flocked the sons and daughters of farmers and fishermen, seeking the money they needed to live. They turned their backs on the cycles of nature for lives of filth and disease.

The Wyrm knows how to twist every emotion, every impulse to its own ends. But one of its favorites is greed. Hate may dim, lust may wane, but greed is an appetite never satisfied. Those who built factories grew rich, and sank part of their wealth into expanding their industrial empires. Many spent their excess wealth to live ever grander lifestyles, traveling, building elaborate estates, and doing their best to make the other newly-rich green with envy. Several species of birds were driven to extinction in the name of faddish fashion; other animals, such as the beaver, disappeared from vast portions of their range.

England and Wales were among the first to be touched by the sulfurous clouds, but as time went on the contagion spread across the world. Ireland, Scotland and northern Wales, were spared the worst effects; factories which sprang up too close to our lands usually met with destruction. Soon the contagion spread to America, and you've witnessed the results, haven't you, cub?

The Famine

Disease and famine are nothing new; despite intensive farming and modern transport systems starvation is still a threat in this world. The Fianna faced privation in their time as well, even in the last few centuries. Scotland was hit hard at the end of the 17th century, and over a million died, Kinfolk included. But not in over a thousand years had we faced a pestilence like in Ireland.

Potatoes were a staple in Ireland almost since they were brought over from the Americas in the 1500's. High in energy and easy to grow, the Irish lived on the tubers, even as they grew wheat for their landlords and for the Queen.

But the dark powers saw in this a way to strike at the Fianna, in the form of a potato blight. The fungus that caused the blight suddenly began to spread across Ireland with unearthly speed, blackening crops overnight. Without food, the people sickened and fell to hunger and disease. Assistance from England was insufficient, and eventually dried up altogether. Those who could fled the land; those who couldn't went hungry. Worse still, the blight struck harder the following year, and harder still the year after that. The tendrils of the pestilence touched as far as Scotland and Belgium.

The camps of the Fianna squabbled as the Irish starved. All saw the Wyrm's foul touch in the blight, but while the Fianna overseas blamed the famine on lack of vigilance, tribemates with Irish roots blamed the English for allowing Kinfolk to starve. The blight was like nothing the Fianna had yet faced; Wyrm-caused ills always had at their heart a Bane that could be rent. Here, though, there was nothing, only an Umbral miasma. Allied spirits fell into Slumber at the merest touch of the fog — and no one is yet sure whether the blight and its attendant suffering spawned the dark mists or vice versa. No rite could rid the land of the pestilence. Packs entered the Umbra questing for answers, to return empty-handed if they returned at all. Frustration grew with each moon. Harsh words were followed by claw and fang, challenges and skirmishes erupted into tragic frenzies. Fighting broke out among packs and septs throughout the British Isles. I hear even the Get were gathering to "liberate" our caerns from our mad paranoia. Only the elders and the ard righ himself kept the tribe from open warfare.

A Different View

I hunted for the Wyrm's hand behind the pestilence which claimed my Kin. Banes there were aplenty, but none capable of withering the sustenance of my people. What a fool I was — we all were. The Wyrm thrives on destruction and corruption; how could it create? How could it create the fungus that blackened fields? The Wyrm itself showed me the truth: only the Wyld could be responsible for the explosion of life that resulted in so much death! The Great Wyrm merely noticed the misery and fed upon it, as is proper. Had the Wyld not created the life that spread with the wind and killed so thoroughly, my cousin and uncounted thousands like her wouldn't have died with shriveled stomachs. On the other hand, I wouldn't have come to the truth, so it's arguably a fair trade.

The Fianna and all the other tribes are fools, for they slavishly fight and die for the Wyld, who doesn't spare a thought for its defenders. There is no room in this dying world for fools, and I'm more than happy to cull them out — starting with the greatest fools, my former brethren the Fianna.

— Imbarsh Staghunter, Black Spiral Dancer Galliard, ancestor spirit

Irishmen, including Kinfolk, left their home for lands across the sea to escape starvation; they continued the exodus well into the 20th century. Their destinations spanned the globe, but most braved the seas on steamers bound for Canada and the United States.

Many a Fiann followed their wayward Kin, of course, bolstering our numbers already overseas. Some believed the blight was a sign that we weren't meant to concentrate our strength in a single place — isolation had been the Wyrm Howlers' downfall — while others joined the Diaspora because they couldn't part from their dearest Kin. The rest closed ranks, patrolling their domains where the wind whistled through empty villages and across abandoned fields.

The Claiming of the West

From all our territories, wanderlust drew the Fianna westward almost from the time the new frontier opened. North America was a paradise, with vast expanses of wilderness, the likes of which Europe hadn't seen in millennia. One small problem... it was already claimed. Didn't stop us for long; the defenders' Kinfolk had been decimated by disease, starvation or warfare, and few Kinfolk means few werewolves in a very short time. Some of us took empty, undefended caerns — that's how our tribe gained this very caern. Others offered to bolster the defenders of struggling septs; more often

than not these offers were rebuffed, and rudely. Occasionally, a feud resulted, and usually we won.

Like I said earlier, history is conquest. I can't apologize for my ancestors claiming new territories. I wouldn't say that in front of anyone else, of course; there are many in the Nation who howl to the moon about the rotten deal the "Pure Ones" got. I notice no "Wyrmcomer" septs giving up their caerns, though. For that matter, you'll never hear the other European tribes bemoaning our loss of Gaul or the Balkans, either.

I'm not saying fighting with other tribes is good, mind you. Certainly not these days, when we need every claw we can muster. But those were different times. We'll work with the other tribes, even the ones that stole our land — most of them, anyway — why don't the Wendigo and Uktena do the same?

Besides, if they were really strong enough, they'd still have their caerns, wouldn't they?

The Kinslaying

Now I come to the Second Great Sin Against Gaia. The First was the slaughter of our cousins, but now we have slain brothers.

Relations between the Bunyip and the newcomer tribes were never particularly cordial. But when the natives would have nothing to do with the European way of doing things, the newcomers grew suspicious. After all, they couldn't see why the locals wouldn't want to share their caerns, rites and secrets with their overseas brothers... unless they really had something to hide. So the Fangs, the Get, and even the Fianna requested, then demanded access to caerns deep within Bunyip territory, only to be rebuffed.

Then the ravaged corpse of a Red Talon Kinfolk was found in a place sacred to the Bunyip. Suspicion flared into rage and hate, spreading like a prairie fire. A great posse, led by the aggrieved Talon ranged across the Outback, slaughtering any Bunyip they came upon. The natives fought like Garou, defending caern and Kin, but in the end our hate burned up every last one. I wonder sometimes what would happen if we fought the Spirals with that much determination and unity. And yes, our tribe is just as guilty as the others are, although I know our tribemates tried to stop the slaughter before it began.

But the worst of it, the bitterest part, was that the entire thing was a setup by the Black Spirals. The dead Kinfolk was their doing, and they prevented the Bunyip from meeting with the European tribes until the cries of vengeance drowned out any voices of reason. We took part in the slaughter of a Garou tribe, may Gaia forgive us. I know there are some among other tribes — and even our own — who haven't forgiven and probably never will.

The War to End War...

In 1913 someone found an excuse to grab some land. Through pride, honor, or greed, a continent chose sides for what was to be a war lasting several weeks or maybe months. It became known as The Great War or, to the hopelessly optimistic, "the War to End War." This was the triumph of the Beast-of-War. No previous war had ever incurred so much destruction, such faceless, impersonal death. The land was churned beyond all recognition, vile new weapons burned bodies and corrupted lungs. Men using outdated tactics against advanced weaponry were butchered by the thousands, turning the battle zones into a great abattoir for year after year.

The European Garou were by necessity involved in the conflict, as troops marched across their bawns and shells flattened field and wood. Fianna elsewhere were generally less interested. Still, some crossed the sea to bolster the caerns of their brethren or watch over Kinfolk. Or to fight our bitterest enemies, for the Black Spirals took advantage of the chaos to entrench themselves (so to speak) more firmly in Europe. They reveled in the bloodshed, contributing whenever they could. Packs ran amok through No Man's Land during a night attack, slaughtering more effectively than the machine guns. Or an officer in a dugout would be dragged through the wall, down a tunnel to the Hive, returning possessed by a Scrag or other Bane.

I have had the fortune to meet a couple of Fianna elders who defended caerns near (and sometimes between) the battle lines, and they told harrowing stories of near-suicidal raids into Hives, bombardments rolling across bawns, and nights diverting or killing patrols from both sides.

We are Garou. There is glory is battle, in charging the foe with claw or blade. But with millions smashed against the bulwarks of enemy trenches, choking in the death-misted hollows or buried in mud, the only victors were Death and the Wyrm. But Death wasn't satisfied with that tally, for it began a new campaign. An influenza epidemic swept the world, claiming more lives than did the war itself. While the illness had little effect on Garou, whole families of Kinfolk took sick. Where their Changing Kin could reach them quickly, they usually recovered, but even so we buried too many of our brothers, cousins, and mates in the wake of that scourge.

Our battle against the Black Spirals was... inconclusive. I wouldn't say a stalemate, 'cause frankly we just don't know. We hit them hard, cleaned out some tunnels, and lost a hell of a lot of fine warriors. But scattering a Hive one day doesn't mean they don't dig in somewhere else the next. Maybe we hurt them, but I don't think we hurt them enough.

Even as the smoke lifted, trouble was already brewing. In their anger, the vindictive allies punished

Germany severely, whose suffering bred first resentment, then hatred, and setting the stage for the next dark chapter of the world's history.

...And the War After That

It seems so clear to us now, but at the time only the brooding pessimists believed war would return in a generation. And even they felt they had seen the worst horrors war had to offer. They were wrong; the next conflict had a new set to show us.

In the Industrial Revolution, the Weaver and the Wyrm began to grow together in new and dangerous ways; in the fascist dictatorships of Europe they found an unholy synthesis. Efficiency and clockwork precision were the order of the day, whether it was train schedules, troop movements or the extermination of entire peoples.

I don't know whether Hitler attracted the tainted or helped create them, but sure enough, among the ranks of his twisted henchmen were a few carefully planted agents of the Wyrm — not that they were necessary. The Black Spirals also surfaced again, using the might of the Axis powers to hunt down and destroy Garou septs. Hitler, fond as he was of all things occult, had a few fetishes in the Reich's collection — some of which were never recovered. Unlike other conflicts, we encouraged our Kinfolk in occupied lands to join the resistance. No question about it, the world had never before seen an evil of this magnitude, obvious and determined, and once again Fianna from around the world sent packs to Europe to fight the Fallen tribe. We felt better about attacking some of the Nazis themselves, for while not every scientist, minister or SS soldier was tainted, Banes tended to congregate around them as they went about their ghastly business.

Tribes worked together like never before, for our caerns were threatened as never before. Black Spirals, often backed up by unwitting German soldiers, engaged us in a desperate struggle for our lives and our caerns. I can say we won most of the battles for the caerns, but not all. And we paid a bitter price in Garou and Kin lives. Luckily, our septs outside continental Europe were relatively safe, allowing packs from North America and the British Isles to serve as defenders for the embattled septs. And believe me, after the first couple of years not even a Black Fury sept would turn away a willing pack of fighters.

Most of our fighting was in Europe. We really didn't get too involved in the other theaters of the war. Our tribemates held no caerns outside of Australia and New Zealand, and Australian Fianna were busy dealing with the repercussions of the Bunyip massacre. Africa was — and still is — forbidden territory.

With the fall of the Axis powers came the withdrawal of the Black Spiral attacks. We gave better than

The Fate of Wolves in Europe

The Fianna take great pains to keep their Kinfolk wolf packs secret, and with good reason; fear and hate have followed the wolf in Europe for at least as long as humans have kept livestock. As far back as the Dark Ages, a French organization known as the Louveterie dedicated itself to hunting wolves. Before the Norman Conquest, fines and tributes were often paid in wolf tongues and heads. In the 17th century Cromwell ordered that no wolfhounds were to be exported from Ireland, for all were needed to combat the lupine scourge (which, to be honest, was frequently Lupus or Hispo Fianna plaguing the unwelcome settlers). In Mary Stuart's time, all Scottish men were required to hunt wolves at least three times a year. It is said that forests were burned simply to deny cover to the predators.

The wolves were hammered hard; eventually, only Kinfolk survived, and they only through the diligent intervention of their werewolf cousins. The Dyn a drowyd yn flaidd were among the cleverest, hiding their Kin in the forests and rugged hills of Wales so that the species was considered extirpated by the eleventh century. In England the last non-Kin wolf fell in the late fifteenth century; by that point there were few enough Kin that they could be hidden even in crowded England. In the remote, strife-torn Scottish Highlands the wolf packs fared better as the clans were more lax about persecution. The last confirmed wolf died just around 1700, although attacks by lupus Fianna were responsible for "wolf sightings" in later years. Wolves were still considered a plague to the Irish throughout the 1600's, with the last death (due in part to the carelessness of a Cliath) in the later 1700's. With the rapid depopulation of Ireland in the mid 1800's, wolf packs gained more freedom of movement, and the wolf population rebounded.

Wolves, both Kinfolk and otherwise, clung to existence for quite some time. The last publicly-known pack fell in France in the late 1920's, although wolf (and werewolf) hunters (possibly even descendants of the Louveterie) continued to track down reports of wolves. Carelessness (in another tribe, luckily) resulted in park wardens sighting a pair of wolves in southern France in 1992. They wandered out of Italy, reportedly, when a skirmish between Get and Black Furies kept the Garou occupied. Since then, biologists have identified four packs, packs that have been the focus of intense anti-wolf sentiment, resulting in several shootings or poisonings. A pack of Fianna are preparing to move into the area to claim the packs as their own; the wolves' former tribes may have something to say about that.

we got, and without spies and storm troopers to use against us they retreated back to their warrens. But we still hadn't managed to wipe the bastards out.

The Wyrm had lost one human ally, but it gained others. The fascist threat was replaced by the communist threat, and war went cold.

Our Irish caerns were untouched, as were most of those in the English countryside, but what few urban caerns we possessed in England were almost all damaged or leveled outright in the bombing. And the years following the war saw rapid growth and industrialization. More pollution than ever flowed into sky and water; More forests were cleared to build more houses and stores, and coal was ripped from the ground to power the new subdivisions and strip malls.

And the legacy of the Second World War lives on, a tainted resonance commemorating places of torture, terror and misery. I tell you, I've taken scars from Banes of all descriptions, and just shrugged 'em off. But there are places in the European Penumbra I wouldn't visit on a dare.

Kinstrife

Kinfolk have long agitated to do what they want without asking anyone's leave. Nearly anywhere you find our ancestral Kinstock, there you'll find discontent, ranging from quiet grumbling to open, burning hatred. In Brittany, Spain, the American South and West — wherever our blood lives, there you'll find someone agitating for freedom, self-determination or simply the right to be left the hell alone.

But it's where our roots are strongest that brings the most trouble. Scotland and Wales have had their independence movements almost since the Normans demanded their submission, but it's Ireland you hear about in the news.

There's rarely true peace since before the Reformation. But we managed to stay out of most of the uprisings and skirmishes, doing our best to keep our Kin safe and giving our all to protect our caerns. But how do you protect Kinfolk when they're fighting each other? When faced with violence and hate on a daily basis, it's not hard to see why some Kin would ignore our warnings and take up stones or guns. We've seen Kinstrife in the American and English Civil Wars, in uprisings and revolts across our territory, and even in the late unpleasantness in Northern Ireland.

Sad to say, our warring Kinfolk even drew a handful of Fianna packs into the struggle on one side or another. When your Kin are killed, it's hard to let it slide. But the price of vengeance was dear. For one thing, any killing of untainted Kin earns a dire fate – ostracism at best, or more likely targeted by a Hunt. More than that, the revenge attacks only reap more vengeance, continuing a cycle that weakens our tribe with every bloodletting. Finally, each body draws attention, either from the government, the human combatants (who are understandably curious who's doing their business besides them) and those hunters who collect pelts and caerns.

Luckily, we managed to keep most of our Kinfolk out of trouble; some were (and still are) among the most persuasive voices for peace. Our tribemates on either side of the Irish border have expended much effort to curb the sectarian warfare dividing our Kin and distracting us from our battles against the Wyrm. It turns out, though, that the fight against the Wyrm also distracted us from another, equally powerful foe.

A Warning

I won't be the last to tell you, stay out of human politics. Yes, even if you're passionate about the topic; *especially* if you're passionate about it, be it environment, local zoning, or religious freedom. You've got more passion than you can deal with, and if things get heated, you'll lose your head pretty damn quick. The elders have always been pretty clear on the matter; it's too easy to take someone's head off without thinking of the consequences. This is what Kinfolk, contacts and allies are for, after all — to interact with the human world on our behalf.

The New Assault

While we dealt with the Wyrm and with the fighting Kin, it we didn't notice the new invasion until it was too late. We've watched the Weaver spreading her webs across the New World at a steady pace, and much of Europe has been densely webbed for years. Yet our strongholds on the rim of the Old World were touched only lightly. That changed with the latter half of the 1990's and the birth of the so-called Celtic Tiger. The European Union poured money into development projects across the British Isles. Computer manufacturers spearheaded a second industrial revolution. Thousands are moving to lands whose chief export used to be people. Towns unchanged for decades swelled uncontrollably, and cities sprawled across the verdant landscape. Dim tracks were paved, and the hillsides from John O'Groats to Bantry Bay sprouted a forest of transmission lines and cellular towers. The Gauntlet has grown stronger as this "progress" spreads, and more of our spirit allies fade away as the Weaver grasps and binds one sacred site after another. This, then, is the Third Great Sin of our tribe: in our defense of Gaia, we focused on the Wyrm, paying too little heed to the equal dangers the Weaver presents. It's been over three millennia since the Fomori Wars nearly killed us. Now there's fomori to the right of us and pattern spiders to the left. And it only gets worse.

Third Battle of Tara

In 1976, at dawn after the Beltane revelry, an army of Black Spiral Dancers converged from all sides of the ancient palace with claws and weapons both ancient and modern. Many Kinfolk and hung-over Fianna staggered out of the halls only to fall in the corrosive greenish-yellow cloud of poison gas launched from mortars smuggled out of the Soviet Union. Survivors mounting the parapets to repel the invaders saw a force of Wyrm Howlers larger than Gaian Garou had seen in some forty years.

One Black Spiral charged through a rain of arrow and spear to the outer wall, over a hundred kilos of plastic explosives strapped to his body. Laughing insanely, he detonated his load, taking two packs and a good section of the wall with him. Soon the breach was focus of a bloody meatgrinder as both sides threw their bodies into the fray. Other Fianna packs and a few fae allies manned the walls as the Wyrm Howlers scaled the ramparts with claw and silver-loaded submachine guns. Meanwhile, Fianna and spirits took to the Penumbra to battle great Banes summoned from Malfeas for the assault.

Ensconced in his hall, the high king blew his great antler-horn to summon the tribe from the four corners of the earth. As the battle wore on, the defenders along the walls were dazzled by the silvery flashes of light from inbound moonbridges – the tribe was gathering for battle. The Spirals knew their surprise attack had failed, and lost heart. In bitterness they withdrew, still spitting venom and loosing poisoned arrows.

The battle was won in less than an hour, but at a horrific cost. Some of the most renowned Fianna of the time lay dead, claws still dug into their vile foes. A great mound was thrown up for the Fianna fallen, while the Black Spiral bodies burned in cleansing pyres — except for their heads, which were spiked along the parapets they had endeavored to capture.

How the enemy surprised Tara has been the subject of many fireside conversations. The accepted theory is that a fallen Fianna led the way through the enchantments and traps, but the identity of the traitor was never revealed. Some close to the court whisper that the culprit was none other than Ard Righ Brendan's only Garou son, Gair, lost in an unsuccessful probe of a Wyrm Howler hive in England. In Brendan's time that kind of rumor could get a Fiann kicked out of the tribe or worse, and Bron would likewise crush any hint of scandal regarding his mentor.

A Spirit of the Times

A young Galliard claims to have seen a new spirit while traveling through the Penumbra near a computer plant in County Cork. "I didn't see it at first, y'know. I was looking for pattern spiders, and just happened to see it crouched there. I swear on my voice, it was a tiger, only made of knotwork like you see in the old bibles and things. Big as a Crinos, sure, and cobwebs rimmed each footprint. It rose to charge me, but before I bolted I got a good close look at the thing. The strands of the knotwork were made from the finest of spider webs. And I all but broke my nose hittin' the Gauntlet on the way out, it was that thick. I swear on Gaia!" Maybe she saw what she claims, or maybe she's trying to impress the cubs. But I heard another Fianna encountered some huge web-lined tracks in Carmarthen, Wales, so maybe we shouldn't be so quick to rule out her rather outlandish tale.

The Bastard Homecoming

There's no other way to say it: our ancient enemies, the Black Spiral Dancers, are coming home — in force.

In the Scottish Highlands, tunnels we thought long abandoned swarmed with our hated foe. Signs of strange Pictish rites are found with alarming frequency. A series of highly polluting industrial accidents began about the time of the first major skirmishes.

And in early November of 2000, a large assault force of Spirals struck Silver Tara. No one knows for sure how they pierced the veil that hides the great palace from prying eyes, though I talked with one Ahroun on the walls that reported a vulture-like creature flying over the advancing enemy. The Ard Righ was forced to blow his horn, summoning Fianna from around the globe. Soon the air fairly shimmered with moon bridges, and after a bloody struggle the monstrous foes were turned back. In the wake of the retreating Spirals, the green ground in the valley turned black and foul, and repeated rituals have not yet revived the land. This telling strike at the very heart of the tribe has everyone on edge; some of the more paranoid of Tara's defenders swear they hear a faint scratching and chipping in the ground beneath the hall, as if someone was excavating tunnels. But it gets even worse: Ard Righ Brendan O'Rourke and his pack left on a secret Umbral run, and no one's seen them since. Word has it they're fulfilling a mission from Stag himself. Before he left, he handed his crown to his successor, Bron MacFionn. I've personally never met the man, but I hear he's solidly in the Tuatha de Fionn's camp, bringing more fae into Tara than its halls have seen in hundreds of years.

Well, since the attack on Tara, there have been several hit-and-run attacks on the bawns of caerns from Brittany to the heart of France. Many elders suspect these are at best feints, at worst training maneuvers, for the reclaiming of Scotland. Already a couple of caerns have fallen, and packs from around the world are headed there to bolster the defenses. The fact that they aren't turned away by the normally independent Highlander Garou says something about the situation's desperation.

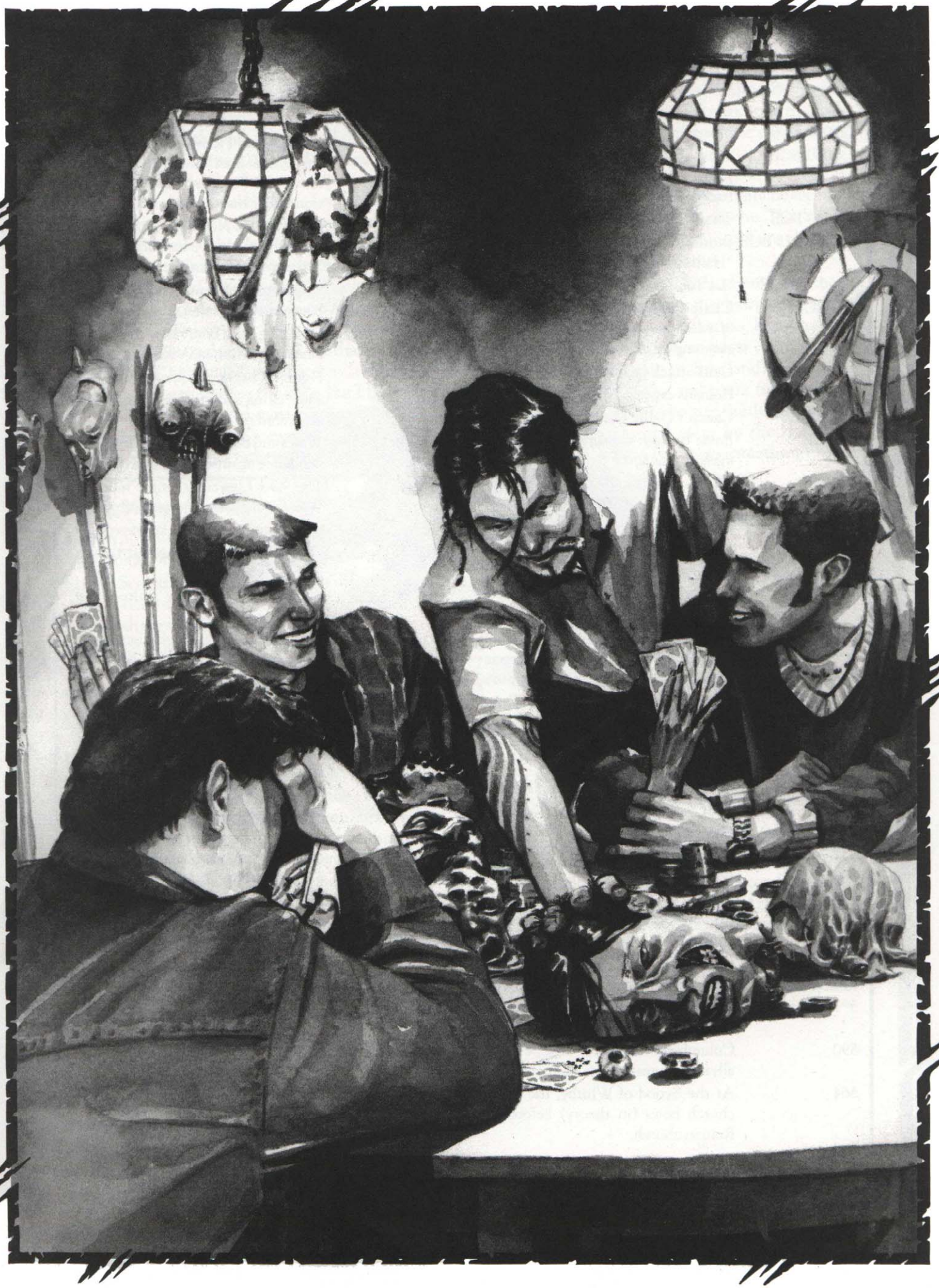
So here's where we're at. The war has gotten hotter, and there's no telling what's going to happen. But don't wear such a long face. Remember the Fomori Wars! We've been in tight places before, but so long as we never forget who we are and where we've come from, we'll never be defeated. So long as you feel the fire of life in your heart, the darkness can never claim you.

Fourth Battle of Tara

The latest strike against the Fianna's palace is notable for a reason not mentioned by the narrator. No enemy has yet found Tara on his own. In each of the past battles, the fortress was betrayed by friends (or former friends) of the Fianna: first the Wyrm Howlers who prior to their fall were occasional visitors; then a Kinfolk under duress; and finally by a Fianna (whose identity remains unknown). No such culprit has yet been found in this latest attack, leading the elders of the tribe to wonder if they have a new, hidden enemy… or far worse, if the ancient enchantments on the great caern are finally beginning to fade.

Timeline

c. 3000 BCE	Newgrange monument erected.
c. 2000 BCE	Greater stonework of Stonehenge completed; the site saw ceremonial use as far back as the 9th millennium BCE.
c. 1200 BCE	*The Fomori Wars in the British Isles.*
c. 1200-475 BCE	Bronze Age and Iron Age Celts of the "Hallstatt Culture" of Central Europe.
c.550-50 BCE	"La Tene Culture."
390 BCE	Cisalpine Celts defeat Rome. *Warders of Men prevent Stag's Children from cleansing the city of Wyrm Taint.*
297 BCE	Celts attack Delphi
133 BCE	Romans capture Numantia.
58-50 BCE	Caesar's Gallic Campaigns.
57 BCE	*Battle between Cinvortrix and Elim for the high kingship of Tara.*
52 BCE	The last great Gallic revolt ends as the leader Vercingetorix surrenders.
3	Romans under Claudius invade Britain.
c. 61	Boudica's revolt.
c. 117	Rome at height of power.
122	*White Howlers and Kin annihilate 9th Legion, sacrificing all survivors in dark rites.*
c. 125	Romans build Hadrian's Wall on their northern British frontier in an unsuccessful effort to hold back the Caledonians.
c. 200	*The White Howlers fall to the Wyrm. First Battle of Tara.*
407	Last Roman regular troops withdraw from Britain.
c. 415	*Fenrir capture their first Fianna Caern in Britain.*
420	*Ard Cruimh Beithioch driven to its resting place by Fianna, Fenrir and Silver Fangs.*
432	Bishop Patrick's mission to Ireland.
c. 500	Battle of Mount Badon.
c. 500	Settlers from Ireland found Dalriada. *Fianna capture two caerns just prior to the initial landings.*
5th-6th cent.	In the face of Saxon pressure, many Britons migrate to Armorica (Brittany).
5th-6th cent.	Celtic monasticism spreads throughout Europe.
590	Columbanus leaves for Gaul, eventually founding as many as 100 monasteries
664	At the Synod of Whitby, the Celtic church bows (in theory) before the Roman church.
843	Scottish and Pictish kingdoms united (in name at least). Kenneth MacAlpin unites the Scots and Picts as one nation under his rule.
c.960	First packs of Northern Fenrir land in Ireland with an eye to taking a caern. They are unsuccessful.
c.999	Larger force of Fenrir land in Ireland, but are driven off after much bloodshed.
1014	High King Brian Boru's army defeats combined force of Irish and Vikings at Clontarf.
1066	Normans begin conquest of England.
1169	The Fianna and the Silver Fangs reach an accord on Ireland.
13th-14th C	Wales and Scotland fight wars of independence against the English.
1218-83	The two Llywelyns unite much of Wales, often warring against England.
1328	Scotland wins its 30-year war for independence.
1400-15	Owain Glyndwr rises against the English in Wales.
1532	Brittany permanently united with France by treaty.
1536-43	"Acts of Union" unite England and Wales.
1649	Cromwell's conquest of Ireland. *Second Battle of Tara.*
1650s	*War between the tribes in England and Scotland, and subsequent invasion by Black Spiral Dancers.*
1707	Act of Union unites England and Scotland.
1789	Beginning of the French Revolution.
1793-1794	French Reign of Terror.
1790s	A series of French-supported Irish independence movements culminated in a failed revolution in 1798.
1799-1815	Napoleonic Wars.
1801	Act of Union unites England and Ireland.
1845-49	The Potato Famine in Ireland.
1914-18	The Great War.
1916	Easter Rebellion in Ireland.
1930s	Great Depression. *European Garou exterminate the Bunyip.*
1939-1945	The Second World War.
1976	*Third Battle of Tara.*
2000	*Fourth Battle of Tara. Bron MacFionn becomes Ard Righ.*



Hearth and Home, Caern and Kin

Dance as if no one were watching,
Sing as if no one were listening,
And live every day as if it were your last
— traditional Irish toast

A Warm Welcome on a Wet Night

The rain soaked through Nada's coat as she made her way down the shabby Glaswegian street. The Shadow Lord swore quietly to herself. She'd heard that Scotland could be grim, but it had rained solidly since she arrived a few hours before. The bus in from the airport — moon bridge was out of the question, given that this was meant to be a discreet meeting — had been an unpleasant enough experience. Finding her way around these streets in the rain was just making her angry. It had taken all her self-control to stop herself shifting and gutting some drunk who propositioned her in the street.

Why the hell had Son-of-Moonlight's Beta insisted on meeting her in a scab? The cities were filthy at the best of times, and this one seemed particularly bad. They buildings were all made of a dismally gray granite and there wasn't a trace of nature to be seen. The people seemed particularly badly nourished as well.

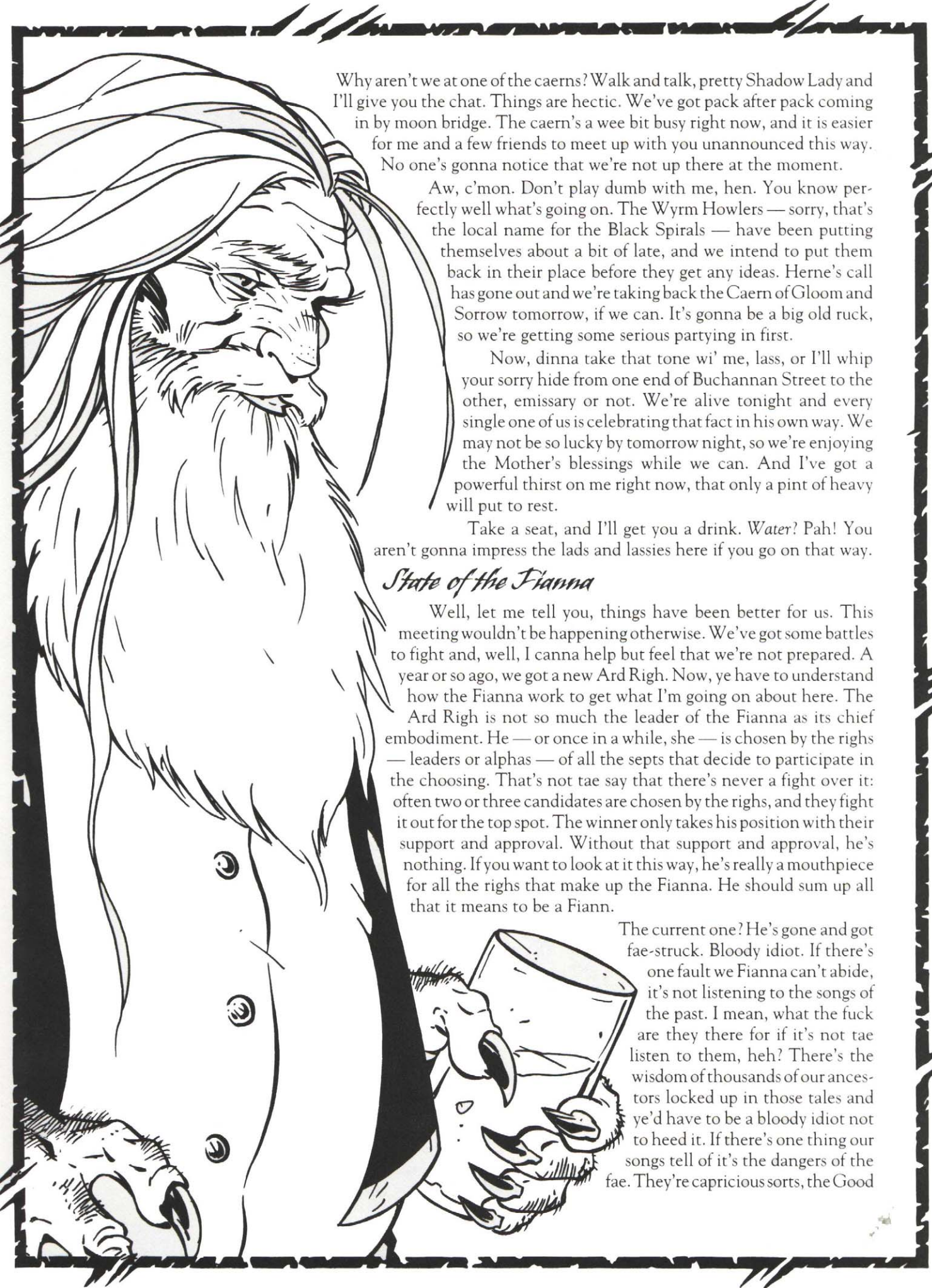
Eventually she found what she assumed was the right address. It was a shabby tenement in a row of identical buildings. Come to think of it, the two streets she'd passed through in the last five minutes had been pretty identical too. She pressed the doorbell, and heard the depressed sigh of its chime sound somewhere inside.

Almost immediately, the door was thrown open. Nada took an involuntary step backwards as a large figure loomed in the doorway. Her eyes took in the portly, bordering on fat, frame, the long red hair and beard and the glass of whisky in his hand. This had to be Robert McNabb.

"McNabb?" she asked.

The Garou nodded and swept her into the hall.

Come in, come in. Yer Konietzko's lass, aren't you? Good ta meet ya. The name's Robert, but a bonny lass like yerself can call me Rab. Welcome to Glasgow. Wait a sec, I'll just grab me coat and will head down the pub. Don't worry, it's run by Kin. We have to have somewhere friendly to go when we're forced down into a scab. Amazing how a pint of heavy and good company can make even a hole like Glasgow tolerable fer a time.



Why aren't we at one of the caerns? Walk and talk, pretty Shadow Lady and I'll give you the chat. Things are hectic. We've got pack after pack coming in by moon bridge. The caern's a wee bit busy right now, and it is easier for me and a few friends to meet up with you unannounced this way. No one's gonna notice that we're not up there at the moment.

Aw, c'mon. Don't play dumb with me, hen. You know perfectly well what's going on. The Wyrm Howlers — sorry, that's the local name for the Black Spirals — have been putting themselves about a bit of late, and we intend to put them back in their place before they get any ideas. Herne's call has gone out and we're taking back the Caern of Gloom and Sorrow tomorrow, if we can. It's gonna be a big old ruck, so we're getting some serious partying in first.

Now, dinna take that tone wi' me, lass, or I'll whip your sorry hide from one end of Buchannan Street to the other, emissary or not. We're alive tonight and every single one of us is celebrating that fact in his own way. We may not be so lucky by tomorrow night, so we're enjoying the Mother's blessings while we can. And I've got a powerful thirst on me right now, that only a pint of heavy will put to rest.

Take a seat, and I'll get you a drink. *Water*? Pah! You aren't gonna impress the lads and lassies here if you go on that way.

State of the Fianna

Well, let me tell you, things have been better for us. This meeting wouldn't be happening otherwise. We've got some battles to fight and, well, I canna help but feel that we're not prepared. A year or so ago, we got a new Ard Righ. Now, ye have to understand how the Fianna work to get what I'm going on about here. The Ard Righ is not so much the leader of the Fianna as its chief embodiment. He — or once in a while, she — is chosen by the righs — leaders or alphas — of all the septs that decide to participate in the choosing. That's not tae say that there's never a fight over it: often two or three candidates are chosen by the righs, and they fight it out for the top spot. The winner only takes his position with their support and approval. Without that support and approval, he's nothing. If you want to look at it this way, he's really a mouthpiece for all the righs that make up the Fianna. He should sum up all that it means to be a Fiann.

The current one? He's gone and got fae-struck. Bloody idiot. If there's one fault we Fianna can't abide, it's not listening to the songs of the past. I mean, what the fuck are they there for if it's not tae listen to them, heh? There's the wisdom of thousands of our ancestors locked up in those tales and ye'd have to be a bloody idiot not to heed it. If there's one thing our songs tell of it's the dangers of the fae. They're capricious sorts, the Good

A Tribe Divided

The political views of most Fianna on the future of their tribe — and by extension the whole Garou Nation — can be roughly grouped into two distinct groups. The members of the larger group, who fully support Ard Righ Bron MacFionn, are great supporters of the traditional ways. For them, the Silver Fangs are the Gaia-appointed rulers of the Garou Nation, and should be helped to prepare for the Apocalypse. They believe that the ancient treaties with the fae should be honored, despite the changes that the Good Folk have undergone and their general unpredictability. They remain opposed to the growth of cities, and often pressure city-dwelling Kin to move to rural areas within reasonable traveling distance of a caern. Many view the Weaver as a threat on a par with the Wyrm and spurn cities as fiercely as the Red Talons.

The smaller, but more active group is championed by Son-of-Moonlight, Righ of the Tri-Spiral sept. These Fianna are more pragmatic than their peers. They're the ones who have been happy to aid their Kinfolk in using European Union grants to help regenerate run-down and often Wyrm-ridden areas. Sure, it hands the land to the Weaver, but better her webs that the Wyrm's bile, they reason, especially this close to the Final Battle of the Apocalypse. This same pragmatism has lead to them abandoning support of the Silver Fangs (although they will still back a strong individual Fang leader), and choosing to follow their own paths, or support other strong leaders, like Margrave Konietzko of the Shadow Lords. Many of the rejuvenated Brotherhood of Herne camp are strong advocates of Son-of-Moonlight's ideals.

There's no clear geographical split between the two groups, although American Fianna, as a whole, tend towards the loyalist faction personified by MacFionn. At the moment the more rebellious group is largely composed of young Garou, most of whom are still of fairly low rank. Thus, they have little or no voice at Tara. Where they do have an impact is in the day to day running of most septs. As the more vocal members start to gain power at the more embattled caerns, the rebellious faction is likely to gain some influence in Tara, too.

Folk and you'd do well to steer clear of them. Some of them are muckle mighty in battle. The Ard Right has one — a troll, by all accounts — as his bodyguard and good luck to him.

But for every one of them that will stand by yer side and fight with you in the name of ancient loyalties, there's three that'll cast a glamour on ye, so befuddle yer mind that you love them beyond all reasons and forget yer duties to sept and Kin. That's what's going on with Bron MacFionn — that's the Ard Righ — at the minute. He's got so obsessed with winning the fae as our allies as they were of old, that he's lost all track of what the righs are saying to him. The Good Folk have their glamours wrapped so tightly round him that he doesn't know what's what any more. Some say that he's taken a Seelie Queen as his lover, and we know that no good can come to those who lose their hearts to a sidhe.

So, while he's playing his games of love and court, what's happening to the rest o'the tribe? Well, there's the point, hen. We've got some big stuff tae be dealing with, the righs are calling out for action, and all the Ard Righ can say is "wait for my negotiations to finish, and then we'll have some serious allies."

Some of us, we don't agree with this, right? We think it high time to get back to a few of the basics of the tribe. We're not bloody hairy fairies, we're warriors for the Mother and it's about time we started making Her proud of Her lads and lassies again. We don't trust the Good Folk, we never have. Yeah, we can work wi' them. Yeah, we've lived alongside them. But, no, we dinna trust them.

We've seen what you Shadow Lords, Furies and Talons are doing in Europe and we want a piece of it. Now, I know Konietzko wants a meeting with Son-of-Moonlight, but that doesn't happen unless I send back good things about you and your conduct in the next day or so. Yes, lass, that means you're coming with us to the Ochils tomorrow. We know ye can cut it as a politician. We want to see if ye can cut it in battle. You make us proud enough that Galliards want to sing of ye tomorrow night, Konietzko and Son-of-Moonlight meet. Clear?

Right, only fair that you know a wee bit about the people you'll be fighting with tomorrow.

Stag

I canna say how other tribes deal wi' their totems, but to us Stag is at the heart, no pun intended, of what we do. Y'see, Stag embodies what it means to be a Fiann. Look at the wall over there. See the painting of a stag on a hilltop? Right, well, what's the most obvious thing you see? Yeah, the antlers. A Stag can use his antlers to fight to protect him and his kin, and he can use them to fight off other males and win breeding right. The same is true of the gifts Gaia gives us — we can use our skills to beat the living shit out of the Wyrm, and we can use them to show off to Kin.

Another face of Stag, the White Hart, is forever associated with love, and passion and romance are dear tae us. And the Stag is a proud beastie, and we are as proud as he. No wonder he chose us as his children. Long before any of us coined the word "Fianna" to mean Stag's Children, we were proudly declaring ourselves to be his family, and we live tae do him proud, in love and in battle. When we let him down, we mourn for him and us and often can't laugh again until we've made amends. Some say that's what happened to the last Ard Righ. He let Stag down, and he's off in the Otherworld somewhere, seeking to make amends.

We tend to view our totems in threes. Three is a powerful number. Just as Gaia has Wyld, Weaver and Wyrm, so Stag has White Hart, Horned One and Cernunnos. Now, I'm no Theurge, and I'm sure one of them druids could give you a clearer picture, but the general idea is that none of us are just one thing.

Druids, Warriors & Bards

The Fianna, like the Celtic tribe who were their kinfolk millennia ago, roughly divide their society into three: druids, warriors and bards.

The druids are the keepers of wisdom, and the title is usually applied to Theurges, Philodox, the wiser Ragabash and even some Galliards who are renowned for the educational qualities of their tales. The bards are the entertainers, and the title is applied to most Galliards and even some of the more amusing Ragabash. The warriors are the Ahroun and the remainder of Ragabash. The latter may seem a curious choice, but there's a long legacy of trickster heroes in both Celtic myth and Fianna alike.

The terms are used informally, and most Fianna use them about as frequently as they use the formal auspice names.

Just because I'm an Ahroun, doesn't mean I can't enjoy a good song or a night of passion with a lass like yerself. Heh. Don't be so quick to dismiss the idea. The night's yet young.

Aw, lass, it was a joke. I know the Litany as well as you do. Probably better.

The Triat

Now, for some more heresy, at least as far as some shortsighted folk are concerned. Look at this pint before ye. What do you see, lass? This is the world as it should be: the glorious bounty of the Mother, given form by the Weaver. Cheers! An' in an hour or so, the Wyrm will do his bit as I piss the remains away. This is a reminder of what we're fighting for — a world in balance once more. Life is a form of that balance. The Wyld gives us birth, the Weaver family, and the Wyrm release once our day is done. Now, the last two are well out o' shape. The Wyrm wants to kill us all before our time is done. The Weaver ties us up in stands of jealousy and possessiveness that twist the family out of the loving thing it should be.

Now, if we want to keep our family safe and sound, we need to kick the living hell out of the Wyrm, so it'll go back to doing its proper job like the beaten cur that it is. Now, that's a wee bit of a job, but we Fianna have never turned down a challenge. Whatever the Fenrir or Fangs say, it was us that dealt with the Howlers first time around and it's us that'll teach them a lesson again.

Once that's done, and mebbe before, we need to get the Weaver back on our side. The ties of family and pack are her doing. When she's back in her place, those ties will be the wonderful thing they once were.

Kin and Caern

Kin matter. Ye have to understand this. It's crucial to what it means to be a Fiann, and it's something that far too many of the other tribes have forgotten. Yer Kin remind you that there is more to life than struggle. We're warriors, sure, but warriors have to have something to fight for — that's what separates them from mere murderers.

Well, now, missy, I understand that we're fighting for Gaia, thank you very much. Do you understand that? Do you understand what Gaia is? She's the Mother of us all, and She loves all Her children, as mothers do, no matter how much they sin against Her. Humans, wolves, Garou — we're all the Mother's children and She wants the best for all of us. Now, She understands that we all misbehave and we need to be punished, but that doesn't mean that She hates us. Any punishment is just a sign that She loves us and wants the best for us. So, when we fight for Gaia, we fight for everyone and everything that lives on the Mother's world.

That's why we keep our Kin so close to use. They remind us of why we're warriors. They give us something to fight for, and someone to come home to once the battle is done. They tend our wounds while we wait for the next one, and as you well know, there's always a next battle. More and more of the Mother's children walk the wrong path every day, and we have to go out and punish them for their misbehavior.

Love Thy Neighbor

That said, there are limits. Not every Kinfolk of a Fiann is aware of us and our struggles. Now, Rory behind the bar there is. He's one of our eyes in the scabs. He keeps us informed of what's going on here and if he spots anything that he thinks requires family attention, he'll send one of his brothers up to the caern. That's how it works, you see — we keep our Kin within traveling distance of our caerns. Now, we don't let them into the heart of the caern, but trusted Kin are able to move in and out of its bawn as they see fit. A few even give up human life and take up residence in the caern as help, lovers and friends to us.

The same goes, as far as we can manage, with our wolf Kin. Now, in some parts of the world wolves are common enough that they can run free in the lands that surround a caern. We've tried to make that the case again in a few places here and there that lost their native wolf populations. Scotland itself is a good case in point — we've been "aiding" a program to reintroduce wolves to the wild in the Highlands, if ye ken what I mean. It's been a wee bit of a success, too. We have some lupus takin' turns to run with them in the wild, too. The Highlands aren't always safe and we'd hate anything to happen to them.

I'll be honest, there are a few wolf Kin in zoos. Aye, they're there with their own agreement and we do our level best to make sure that the environment is as comfortable for them as we can manage. And yeah, we get them out of there for moots, but it's often the only safe way for them to live close to the humans.

Caerns

Now then, caern's an interesting word. It one of those that we gifted the rest of the Garou. Y'see, part of our Rite of Caern Building involves building a, well, cairn. Each Garou in the ritual carries a single rock — the largest they can — to the heart of the caern as part of the ritual. We took to calling the heart of the caern "the cairn", while the whole damn thing was called the Nemeton. A few old-timers and traditionalists still use the name, but most of us just call it a caern and have done.

Now, when you think of a Fianna caern you probably think of stone circles and fog-enshrouded hilltops, right? Heh. You've been listening to way too many misty-eyed bards. Let me put you straight: Yeah, some of our caerns do look like that. They're usually ones we had to take off the Get or the Fangs, though. Yeah, and we built a few of them ourselves, in places where we let other tribes influence our ways of thinking. On the whole, though, we don't defile our holy places with Weaver-inspired structures. We keep 'em natural, the way the mother intended. A pile o' rocks, to mark the strength at the heart of the caern, and some tributes to the spirit that call it home — skins of beasts we've caught in its honor and the like — usually placed in deep pits around that cairn, and that's yer lot.

Oh, yeah, apart from the water that is. You'll find that the majority of Fianna caerns have water in them in some way. Whether it's a natural pool, a river or the edge of a lake, water is very important to us. For a start it makes a good gateway to the Otherworld — yeah, the Umbra. Beyond that, it's another one of those things that sums up life for us. Water is a life-giver: you need it to drink, to bathe, to cleanse or to fish. However, it can also stand for death. You can drown, you can be swept away, you can die from exposure to the elements. Yeah, even us Garou. Sometimes we even make sacrifices to the spirits by throwing things into the water. You can look all ye like, but you'll never find the thing we sacrificed.

Water's also important because it draws fish spirits, many of whom bring gifts of wisdom with them. Any caern that's blessed with salmon-spirits will draw bards from far and wide to partake of Salmon's famed wisdom.

There's a purity to these places that you don't get wi' the over-elaborate bollocks some of the other tribes throw up. You spend a wee spell in one of our caerns and you'll feel the passions running through the Mother clearer than you know yer own mind, lass. Each structure you put in that heart muffles Her voice a little, and that's a shame. In this day and age, we're even less likely to build a caern that looks like a knock-off Stonehenge. When the Wyrm's forces can use the Weaver's toys to take a picture of a whole country in detail enough to mark out a rock, being that obvious is dumb.

Like I said, we let a few Kinfolk live in the bawn. That's especially true of those who are mated wi' one of us. We're a people with a fierce love on us, and we can't bear to be parted from those we love more than we have to. The presence of our loved ones close at hands make our parties that wee bit more special, and helps us keep to the Litany when our passions run a wee bit too fierce, if you ken what I'm saying.

Fianna Moots

In our moots we celebrate the world as it should be, the world we will make when we triumph on the plain of the Apocalypse. Now, we're a close-knit bunch at the best o' times, so we're likely to get together with some regularity. If a month goes by without some kinda celebration at one of our caerns, there's something seriously wrong. Hell, if a Fiann is living in a multi-tribal sept, he'll do his level best to make sure that the werewolves there do their best to remember what it is that they're fighting for.

We love a good party. That's why so many of our cubs spend their youth trying to crash the moots of other tribes. However, none of them can hold a candle to our own bashes. There's three key components to a Fianna moot: song, dance and booze. Now, you ask any werewolf the world over and they'll tell you that the Galliards of the Fianna are the finest on the face of the Mother, or they'll be a liar. Not one other tribe has learned how to mingle the human voice, the wolf howl and the music of instruments together into something that touches every Garou right where it matters. There's a reason why our elders are known as the Council of Song, y'know. Our songs speak to the spirit within each of us.

Dance, on the other hand, speaks to the physical. Our dancing is a raw, physical thing. Even our partner dancers are fast furious and not for the faint of heart. If a Garou forgets herself, a poor Kin can easily find himself flying through their air and spending the rest of the spring recovering from his injuries. Often we have multiple dances — some in Lupus, some in Homid and the Garou-only dances in Crinos. The elders watch those ones carefully, as we don't want any Litany violations, do we?

Aye, the booze. Now, drink is important to the Fianna, and not just because we're drunken wee bastards. As I said before, drink is an important symbolic thing. There's good reason that our Irish Kin called whiskey "uisce beatha" — the water of life. It has within it all three of the Triat, in multiple ways. At our moots we drink it so that the Wyrm within it can break the bonds of the Weaver on our hearts and open us to the passion of the Wyld. Do you see? The passion that makes us Fianna is always close to the surface, and is a wee touch of the Wyld within us. Letting it loose, even for a night, helps restore the balance that was lost so long ago.

Moots are a time for partying, for the enjoyment of both the physical world and the spiritual that the Mother made for us. Sometimes, by really enjoying yourself, you can come to understand who you really are. The inhibitions and duties that bind us fall away and the truth of the werewolf beneath lies revealed. A warrior who knows himself is a hard opponent to beat.

Lords of the Dance

Those of you familiar with the Celidh — a traditional Celtic form of gathering — may have experienced a fairly genteel form of dancing. Couples walk, dance and turn to the beat of the Irish or Scottish music in a leisurely, ordered way. Fair enough. It's a very adult way of dancing.

Now imagine teenagers doing the same thing, with a hint of illicit booze in their system. They've been doing the dances since they were kids, so they know them really well. That frees them to compete as only teenagers can. The young men compete with each other to dance harder, faster, to throw their partners around with greater force and control. The lady does her best to catch her favored man's eye as she gets her brief dance with him before being passed on, and does her best to make him jealous when she's dancing with others. It's a far more wild and primal affair.

Now, for those teenagers substitute the warriors of Gaia, ever competitive, alarmingly strong and always ready to dance and fight. Desire runs close to the surface of every dance, and the agony of passing your partner on after every repetition in some dances, or having to lend them to someone else repeatedly help keep sexual tensions high. A hand held for a moment too long or a partner treated just a touch too roughly are causes for fights to start — and for hearts to be won. As you can imagine, a Fianna dance, while bearing superficial similarities to a human Celidh, is not for the weak or the faint-hearted.

Moots are also a time for friendly competition. We complete for our positions of honor: the chairs of song, poetry and stories. You'd think just the Galliards would compete, wouldn't you? Well, you'd be wrong. All auspices compete, and more often than not, it's one of the others who takes the contest. Y'see, the Galliards have to work on knowing as many tales as they can. The other auspices can practice one story, poem or song so well that it knocks the others for six. Besides, many of us just get the Galliards so drunk that they can't compete.

Festivals

There are four major celebrations through the year. They are known by several different names depending on where you are in the world, but here's how I see them.

Imbolc

Otherwise known as the "thank fuck that's over" celebration, Imbolc is when we celebrate the move from winter to spring. Winter's a hard time in most of our caerns. Snow covers the land, the Mother hides Her glory until Father Sun returns, and those of us who like to eat food we've killed or grown with our own hands often have to make do with stuff we've stored since summer. It's a hard, gray depressing time and Fianna caerns are often mournful places through the winter. Fire, whisky and song only go so far to offset the somber mood of winter.

When Imbolc comes, we know it's nearly over. The Otherworld normally shows signs of fresh life again before the physical world does, so often we send packs off questing for portents of the year to come.

Imbolc is often the birthing time, too. Nine months after the Beltane fires, both Fianna and Kin give birth to the babies they conceived back then. The growth of the tribe and the expansion of our families reminds us of the Mother's power and of what we have to protect. Imbolc is about the future.

Beltane

Next up is May Day. Spring's becoming summer and our passions are in full flood. The last of the winter's wood is burned, the last of the old year's booze (and the first of the new) is drunk and a young Fiann's thoughts turn to hot, sweaty love. More pups are conceived at Beltane than any other time of the year. I love Beltane, I can tell ye. If a man can't get drunk as a skunk and laid more often than a horny rabbit on that day, he can't get laid at all.

Beltane is also the traditional time of challenge. If someone seeks to be righ of a sept, or to assume any other position within it, this is the night when they can make their challenge freely. The Master of the Challenge is usually worked off his feet, the poor bastard, keeping track of who is to fight and when. When the fights are done and the evening rites begin, though, we make sure he or she is well rewarded for those efforts.

Aye, I love Beltane, fights, good drink and better lovers. The Fianna never feel more alive and closer to the Mother than they do at Beltane.

I hear that a few, traditional septs invite the Good Folk — the friendly Seelie ones, only — along to their Beltane revels. More fool them, I say. Inviting anyone but one of the Mother's chosen warriors into your caern is just asking for trouble. Maybe once we and they were bound by oaths strong enough to keep us safe, but those days are long past.

Lughnassa

If you had all the festivals back to back, Lughnassa'd be where ye catch your breath after a wild Beltane romp. Not that it isn't a festival proper, mind — it's an excuse to celebrate, and that's what we do. As ye've no doubt heard.

But Lughnassa isn't as wild as Beltane, nor as refreshing as Imbolc. It's more of a way to fortify ourselves, y'see. To make ready for the comin' winter by eating and drinking and generally talking about what we've done and what we've yet to do. Aye, with a fine ale and a good fire to warm you, and tales of glory to fire ye up, the coming autumn and winter seem almost bearable.

Many of us get depressed as autumn comes, and this feast can be maudlin if we're not careful. Our best Galliards, though, can take a tale of the past, or the story of one of us that has recently died, and turn it into a thing that we can celebrate.

Many of the younger packs seek to ease the pain by going on Wild Hunts, seeking out and destroying as many of the Wyrm's minions in one night as they possibly can, honoring their ancestors with each blow they strike.

Samhain

Samhain, or Hallowe'en, as we called it when I was a lad, is our last real chance to celebrate before winter's teeth really begin to bite. Of course, humans have rather more fun on All Hallows' than we do.

If ever there was a time that showed that drink is the soul of the Fianna incarnate, it's Samhain. Compare a drunk Fiann on Beltane night with one on this evening. On May Day he laughs, dances and loves with the best of them. Even the Crinos seems too small to contain the joy in their heart. When winter comes, that joy turns into introspection and mourning and we experience the pain of loss. We know our fallen brothers and sisters now serve the Mother in a different way, but that doesn't mean that we don't miss them.

We don't get too drunk, though. The Gauntlet often thins perilously on Samhain night, and more often than not the things that get through are not the things that we want in The Realm. Of all our celebrations, Samhain is the real feast of battle, for it's on Samhain that we are most often called to fight.

I hear tell that once we fought against the fae on Samhain night, standing guard over their faerie mounds as the Unseelie rode out to harass our Kin. Nowadays, it's more likely to be Banes or other Wyrm scum that we face on that night — or Weaver spirits trying to make the Gauntlet strong again.

Auspices

Ahroun

We like a good ruck as much as the next werewolf, against fae, fomori or Wyrm Howlers, and our Ahroun have always held a place of honor in Fianna society. The old warrior/bard/druid threesome that led local human culture millennia ago is still alive and well amongst the Fianna. A community needs someone to defend it. The humans may have forgotten that there are things out there that must be fought, be the Garou never can forget it. The Ahroun are our warriors amongst warriors. The warrior's life is not a long one, though, so those tales of Fianna drinking enough booze to kill a horse? That's probably an Ahroun at work. If yer going to die you want to enjoy life while you still can. Nobody can celebrate life like one of us lads. Just ask the Kin, if you follow my drift.

Galliard

The Galliards are the keepers of our history. Some people like to keep it in books or on computers, but we like to keep it in the minds of our people. I tell ya, a good Galliard will beat a well-written book any day of the week. The real storyteller is the one who knows how to play an audience, not how to twist fancy words into mangled sentences. No lie: we have the best Galliards of the Garou Nation. And I wouldn't advise arguing with that fact, lass, unless you want to limp yer way back to the Balkans.

Why are they so good? It's because they know that there's more to their role than just remembering the stories o' the past. Battle is as much about psychology as it is tooth and claw, if ye ken what I mean. Scare the shite out of the enemy and you'll have as good as won before you start. It's a trick the Wyrm Howlers picked up from us before they fell, but we're a wee bit better than them at it, if ye ask me. Ye'll know a

The Heart's Song

In this day and age, when you think Celtic music, you probably think of the New Agey, ethereal music personified by bands like Clannad or singers like Enya or Loreena McKennitt. While this music certainly plays to the spiritual side of the Garou, there's far more to Celtic music — and the soul of the Fianna — than that. From the aggressive and joyful pipe bands of the Scots to the heart-rending beauty of a Welsh Male Voice Choir, to Celidh music to the more bawdy songs of the Corries to the pop crossover of the Corrs, the Proclaimers or even U2, there's a wealth of music out there that explores different moods and passions.

On the whole, the Celtic peoples are a fierce, practical lot, as a night on the piss in Glasgow, Swansea or Dublin will make apparent. Joyful, bawdy songs are the norm and well suited to the sound track of a Fianna revel. "Fairytale of New York" is almost of hymn of drunken revelry that should be high on your listening list.

When you turn to American Fianna, country music is a great source of inspiration. Mix up a Johnny Cash album with one by Christie Moore and you'll soon see the influence and links between the two.

Fianna pack going into battle by the howls and songs that precede the charge. Our Galliards can lead war cries that'll put the fear of Gaia intae anyone. On those fine days, too rare in this day, when a whole bunch of us get together to give the Wyrm a good kicking, you'll hear horns and trumpets and the pipes. If you're really lucky you'll get the works tomorrow, lass. Our really good Galliards are skilled at keeping several packs coordinated by a combination of howl and song.

Theurge

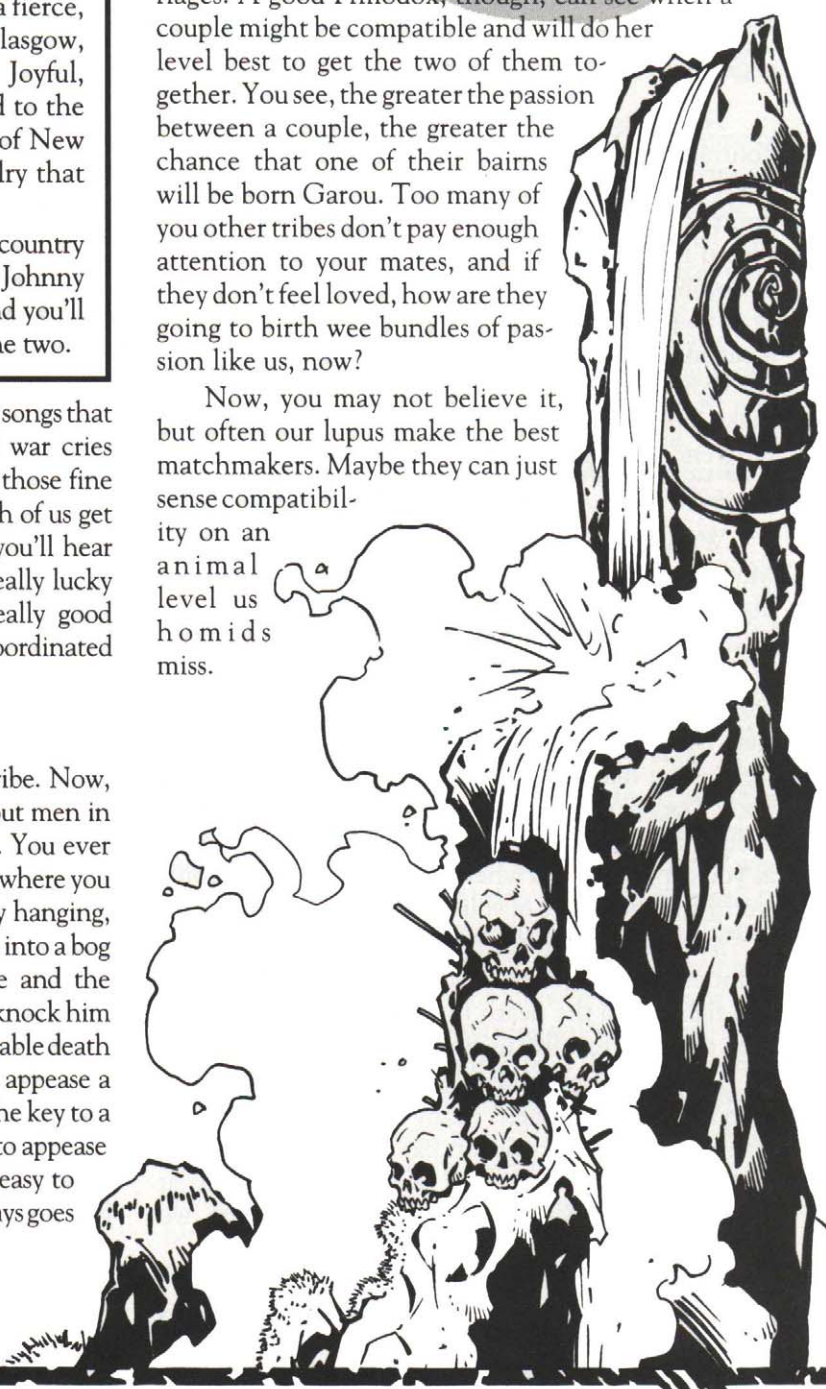
Theurges are some of the druids of the tribe. Now, don't you be getting any ideas in yer head about men in white sheets cutting mistletoe on the solstice. You ever heard of the threefold death? Yeah, well, that's where you kill a man in three ways simultaneously — say hanging, stabbing and whipping — before throwing him into a bog to appease the spirits. If they're feeling nice and the sacrifice is a willing volunteer, they just might knock him out first. Sounds nasty, right? None of the honorable death in battle shite? Well, if that's what it takes to appease a particular spirit, that's what they'll do. That's the key to a Fianna Theurge — she'll go as far as she needs to appease the spirits. They're our allies, and they aren't easy to deal with, but we need them. What a Theurge says goes when it comes to the Umbra and the spirits.

Philodox

Now, yer Philodox is a druid too, but one wi' a hard task. It's not a job that everybody wants to do, but it needs doing all they same. We're a passionate lot and we get a wee bit carried away from time tae time. You need someone to rein us in, but it's a thankless task at the best o' times. What makes it worse is that with guardianship of the law, comes guardianship of our morals. A moot can be a hard time for a Philodox. While everyone else parties, he's watching over us to make sure we don't get too far out o'line. We don't want any more mules thank you very much.

The Philodox are also our matchmakers. Now, don't get me wrong. We're not ones for forced marriages. A good Philodox, though, can see when a couple might be compatible and will do her level best to get the two of them together. You see, the greater the passion between a couple, the greater the chance that one of their bairns will be born Garou. Too many of you other tribes don't pay enough attention to your mates, and if they don't feel loved, how are they going to birth wee bundles of passion like us, now?

Now, you may not believe it, but often our lupus make the best matchmakers. Maybe they can just sense compatibility on an animal level us homids miss.



Ragabash

We like and respect a good leader, but we like them tae prove themselves first. The Ragabash watch our rulers and make sure they do what they should. I hear that some tribes that that the Ragabash should make sure that they don't take themselves too seriously. Well, none of us take ourselves too seriously to start with. Nah, we expect our Ragabash to make sure that our alphas live up to the job. If they don't, well, then the Ragabash sends word to the best person to take over the job.... And if the alpha can hold up under a determined assault from a Ragabash, we'll follow them to the end o'the earth.

What? Oh, yer Ragabash is a warrior. Trickery is just as valid a way of defeating an enemy as tearing him tae bits, you know. I thought you lot were meant to be astute.

Breeds

Now, lass, each and every Fiann is a rich mess of contradictions and desires. We tend tae be very up front about what we want in life, even if those wants contradict each other from time tae time. Being a Garou tends tae give you a number of different outlooks on life. You're a werewolf, you're a Fiann, you're of an auspice and you were born of someone. And those someones, your family, can make a real difference to who you become. Whatever some of the tribes try tae make out, we know that those early years make a big difference tae the Garou you become.

Homid

Well, we're nae different to most of the tribes. Most of us are homids these days. We're a pretty damn diverse lot. Yeah, you get some American types from Toledo, Ohio or Lincoln, Nebraska, or some such place, who put on kilts and affect a brogue and wax poetic about "the motherland" in a way that implies that they have no idea what the modern UK and Ireland are like and have a lousy grasp of history tae boot. They're in the minority, though. Most are pretty ordinary people from the lands they were born in, as far as you can be normal when half of you is in the spirit world and the whole of you is on a bloody hair trigger.

Most of us are just like me — keen on drinking, pointless shouting, a good song and a good fuck. Oh, and fighting to the death to save Gaia of course, but then that goes for all of us, even the wee metis bastards.

I have tae admit that us homids create most of the bloody trouble, though. Many of us have problems letting go of human concepts like jealousy, monogamy and stuff like that. Now, we really canna afford that sort of behavior. We need tae breed and there's no two ways about it. Whomever's the best equipped at any point to do the dirty and impregnate a Kin lass should get on wi' the job. And anyone who thinks they've got a prior claim should bloody well step aside for the good of the tribe. Och, but it doesn't often happen like that. We've had far too many challenges over breeding rights. That's what happens what the heart gets in the way of common sense.

Oh, yeah and there's the whole nationalism thing. It takes a wee while for the homids to get used to being Fianna rather than British or Irish or American or whatever. Och, and then there's the bloody French nationalists, but you dinna want to hear about them, lass. Like I was saying, some of us canna let go of seeing all people of their country as kin, rather than the precious few who actually carry our blood. We beat it out of most of the cubs before they get to go on their Rite of Passage, though. That's one of the reasons we insist on isolation for them so much. It helps sever those links.

Lupus

Now, I wish there were more Fianna lupus left to us. It's hard enough keeping wild wolf packs in most of the places we call home. Some of our lupus devote much of their time to being the alpha of a pack of Kin, to keep them hidden in the wilds. So, we have a few native packs hiding out in places where the humans think that the wolves are all long dead.

What wi' staying close to our Kin and all it's far too easy for us to get carried away with human matters. If someone's giving the Kin a hard time, you can't help but feel that you should go and have a wee chat with then, if you catch my drift. The fact that we all feel things so strongly makes it that much harder to resist.

The lupus in the tribe are damn good at letting the rest of us know when we've let human concerns distract us from the things that really matter — fighting the Wyrm. We had a wee problem with some of the lads getting involved in the Troubles over in Irelands some years back, and it took some serious work led by a lupus Ragabash to show the hot-headed bastards where their priorities should lie.

More to the point, when I say "family is important to the Fianna," I dinna really mean family in the human sense. The bloody monkeys have no idea what it means to treasure those that are close to you. Now the lupus, they know. While they were still cubs, before the change, they had to rely on their packs — their families — to survive. They're often the fiercest advocates of protecting our Kin and making sure we treat 'em right. Sometimes, of course, treating 'em right means reminding them of their place and the lupus are damn good at that, lassie.

Metis

Oh, so you want me to talk about the bloody mules as well, do you lass? Wee, fuckin', Wyrm-corrupted bastards, bringing the guid name of the tribe into disrepute. Excuse me, but I've got a nasty taste in my mouth all of a sudden. Mebbe the whisky will burn the taste away. Ah, that's better. Now, let's gets this straight. Metis are an affront to the Mother. They're a living, walking, stinking reminder that even we Fianna get things wrong once in a while.

Listen, kids today, they think they can shag anything that moves. If they've got the desire, they've got the right to satisfy it. Well, that's bollocks. Nature has rules, you see, and one of those is that Garou should not mate with Garou. I mean, why the fuck would they want to? Stupid bastards. There's enough bonny Kin out there to satisfy those few of us that are left in this day and age.

Now, like I said, mules are stinking scum. We tolerate them, just about, because we have no choice. If there were more Garou in the world, maybe we could go back to slaughtering them at birth, like we used to, but I don't think we can afford tae do so now. You have tae keep a bloody good eye on the wee bastards, though. The fuckers turn to the Wyrm far more easily than real Garou and the moment they show any signs of doing so, it's better for all of us if we deal with them there and then.

Just because we tolerate them doesn't mean we have to like it, though. A mule should never be allowed to feel comfortable about what it is. It has to do twice as well as the rest of us, because it's only half as good. Every slip-up will be pointed out, mocked and punished.

And if they're caught trying it on wi' one of our Kin? Well, the best they can expect is a good beating. The Mother made them sterile, so they have no business trying to have sex like a real Garou. They should bloody accept their place as a living reminder of crime and not try tae get above their station. And mebbe the rest of us will look at the miserable bastards and keep that image in mind to stop our passions going the wrong way.

Becoming Fianna

Now then, lass. The one area where we Fianna can really claim to be well ahead of the pack is in Kin-fetching. We hold our Kin nearer and dearer than most other tribes. Now, some might say that doing this leaves us vulnerable, that our Kin are a point at which we could be attacked. That's a pile o' steaming shite, if you ask me. Without our Kin, where are the next generation of Fianna going to come from? More tae the point, in whose arms are we going to spend the night after a really good fight?

Even if we can't keep track of all our relatives ourselves, those Kin that are really close to us tend to keep track of those a wee bit further away. The Mother's a bit funny when it comes to letting us breed true, and sometimes we go a generation or two before the blood really shows, so it's important that we keep a track on the extended family, especially as some of us are, well, enthusiastic in our breeding duties. I've got over a dozen wee ones meself, and I'm hoping for at least one tae breed true. Young Neil is showing all the signs, so let's hope....

So, when one of the bairns starts showing the signs that they might be one o' us, we keep a special eye on them, and make sure that the Kin-fetch is keeping a good eye on the youngster. They change, and we'll be there within the day. Now, we don't hang about. They need to be pulled away from their family and into Garou life pretty sharpish. A new cub's a dangerous beastie and we don't want them tearing their families into wee pieces, now, do we?

Of course, it's nae easy task to introduce some of them tae our world. Many of our caerns are run on somewhat traditional lines. We take a great pride in our heritage and we don't give up the traditional ways until something is proved tae be a world better than what we do now. That's one of the reasons that so much of our history still hasn't been written down. No book or television has the power of a good Galliard. I hear the American caerns can be even more old-fashioned in their outlooks than we can. Well, they've got the space to hide from others that'd be puzzled at the woad and kilts on show.

Fostering

So the wee ones go through a few months of adjustment and training, getting used to life in our society. We keep them as isolated from the modern world as we can during this time. The Wyrm throws enough temptations at us without it distracting them during this difficult time of their lives.

Generally, we assign a young Fiann to an older Garou of his auspice to be his mentor. The mentor works with elder Garou of all auspices to put the wee one through a rigorous training schedule designed to familiarize them with all aspects of Garou and Fianna life, with particular emphasis on the skills of their own auspice. Oh, and they're not allowed to drink or shag during their fosterage. If anything will encourage them to work hard and earn their Rite of Passage, it's that.

Once upon a time, we'd send a Fiann who was born of the close Kin of a sept to another caern to learn the ways of the tribe. Bron's been trying to get that old tradition underway wi' a degree of success, I'll grant him that. Those cubs that are born without any knowledge of us are just fostered to the nearest caern. No

sense in messing around with the fostering of a cub that has to come to terms with their existence as a werewolf before we can teach the wee buggers anything useful.

One of the things we really have tae beat into cubs nowadays is respect for Kin and family, as that seems to all but have disappeared from the world. If that isn't a sign of the Apocalypse, what is?

God, Gaia and Garou

Many of our Kin are fiercely religious people — Christian in particular. The Celtic people picked up the religion something fierce, and it displaced the old ways amongst them in short order. Within a hundred years, traditions thousands of years old were swept aside and replaced with the worship of this martyr god. Now, those that live around us know the truth of Mother Gaia and the Otherworld, but some new cubs have real problems if they've sunk too deep into Catholic or Protestant views. It's a real shock the first time we take them to the Otherworld, and they start to meet spirits. Some think they're in the presence of devils, others of angels. Some canna cope and go near catatonic with the shock of it all. They recover in the end. They can feel that the Otherworld is as much their home as this world is, and they learn to adapt.

There is a wee group within the tribe that interprets Gaia as a form o' the Virgin Mary, the other spirits as forms o' the angels and tries to deal wi' it all that way, but I think that they're fighting a losing battle. Most of us eventually give up on the Christian faith and accept the worship of Gaia as they damn should. Makes life much easier, if you ask me lass.

Rites of Passage

A year on, most cubs are dying for a drink and a night o' passion, but they have to get through a number of tests first. I once heard some bollocks about these tests being the traditional ones of Fionn Mac Cumhail, but why we'd use the tests of some Kinfolk lad, even a famous and successful one like him, is quite beyond my ken.

First and most important, they must be able to recite any one of the 12 great sagas of our tribe on demand. It doesn't matter what auspice they are, if they don't know the history of the Fianna, they can't be considered a fully-grown Fiann until they do. Because of this, every single cub carries the history of our people with them, and it can never be lost as long as one of us survive. Galliards, of course, would be expected to give a fuller and more engrossing rendition than anyone else.

Then there are tests of physical prowess. You ken the kinda thing I mean: pulling a thorn from your foot while running without slackening your pace; defending yourself with a stick while buried to the waist; defending a wooden log over a stream against all comers; being the first up a cliff while pursued by three other Garou; tracking a specified animal for three days and three nights without it knowing that you're there — that sort of thing.

Next comes sacrifice. They're expected to craft or win something of great value, in the eyes of the Council of Song, and then sacrifice it to the caern's totem. This can be anything from an intricately worked torc, shield or weapon to a trophy won from an enemy in trickery or combat. This is cast into the water at the heart of the caern, or left in a deep pit if the caern lacks water. I doubt anyone's been thick enough to look for a sacrifice after it has been made, but I'm sure they'll never find it.

Oh, and yeah, they'll be spending a while in the Otherworld, too. Knowing the Otherworld is part of who we are. They're taken to the heart of a caern and are expected to pass through to the Otherworld using the water there. There they'll find one of the incarnations of Stag or an associated spirit. Then they'll be sent on a quest, to prove their worthiness as a Fiann. More often than not, we'll gather a group of youngsters together for this....

Oh, the other tribes do this, too? See, you all learn from us. Yeah, well, we prepare them well. Most are stripped naked before they leave, and their bodies are daubed with knotwork under the directions of our druids. I'm sure you can imagine the cat calling and insults over the cubs' physical assets, if ye catch my drift, lass. Still, if they can't take a wee bit o'ribbing, or use their anger to their benefit, then they wouldn't be good Fianna.

If they get back, well, they're in for the party of their lives. If they've been in the sept for a year without catching the eye of a Kin or two, then they're no real Fiann. They'll have a sweetheart waiting for them when they come home, and a few good drinks and hearty shag will soon put the struggles of their rite behind them. Once the hangover's gone, then they get the full Rite and are welcomed into the sept as grown Fianna. There won't be too much celebrating, though it pains me to say it. We need every warrior we have right now, and we grab our joy where we can, before we head off to the battlefield once more. It's nae an easy life, but I love it all the same.

Humor

Oh, aye, I nearly forgot. It's the drink, ye ken. I just canna handle it so well in my breed form. Anyway, one of the things we make sure to teach our bairns is to have a bloody sense of humor. Yeah, lass, don't look so worried. I know you've found my flippancy discomforting. You know what? I don't care. We Garou in the End

Times live a dark, dismal life. A night drinking like this is a rare thing and it's just going to get rarer as the Apocalypse approaches.

We're a passionate people, and we're proud of it. We can get pretty damn swept up in fighting the Wyrm, and we can all too easily forget our duty to our Kin and to the future. After all, we're all of us warriors born. So, we celebrate our lives and our reason for being her with equal passion. We're also prey to depression, when life doesn't go our way, and we all know that's the short, steep, downhill slope to Harano. So, we have to learn to laugh at life, too, even when we're facing a hundred Howlers with just a couple of a packs and a single bottle of whiskey to go round.

We teach the young ones to laugh at themselves. Truth be told, we tried to help out the Get by doing the same thing, but they didn't seem to get the joke. Their loss, wouldn't you say, lass? Och, wipe that grimace off yer face lass. We'll prove to you, come the morrow, that we're fiercer on the battlefield than any of your lot.

Camps

Well, much as we Fianna like the idea of being one big, happy family, it doesn't work like that. A few Children of Dire I hunt with occasionally say it's all the fault of the homids and that factionalism is something our human sides brings to the tribe. If we weren't so enamored of human pursuits like drinking, we'd all be a lot closer. Well now, maybe they're right and mebbe they're not. As far as I can see, the tribe splits more by role than opinion. Y'see, by staying close to yer family, you see that everyone has a role tae play in that society and not just what yer auspice makes you, if you ken what I mean.

Songkeepers

Chances are you've seen more of this camp than any other Fianna. The Songkeepers are devoted to keeping alive the history of not just Stag's Chosen, but the whole of the Garou Nation. That's why many of our best Galliards can be found traveling the world, learning new and old songs from the other tribes. It's always a pleasure tae have a Songkeeper at a moot. His chat and songs will bring the fireside alive with tales of different lands, loves and battles that'll make you proud to be one of the Mother's chosen.

The Songkeepers, despite the name, aren't just Galliards, though. The Theurges try to keep alive all the rites of the Garou, and make sure none are lost to us as we approach the Apocalypse. Philodox learn from the wisdom of other tribes, and make sure that it is available to all. In fact it was Berberana Muguruza who arranged this meeting. She's a Songkeeper Philodox. Quite a looker, too. Don't get that many Spanish types round here.

There's even some Ragabash, who keep links with the other tribes. Sharing ways to keep the rest of us on our toes, no doubt. Wee bastards.

I've never been tae a Songkeeper moot — and they do hold them from time tae time, or so I've been told. What stories and songs must be heard there, heh? Some say that the real rulers of out tribe are the Songkeepers, for their words direct the minds of every righ, including the Ard Righ himself. I canna see it myself. They've got so much to learn, I dinna think they've got time for politics.

The Brotherhood of Herne

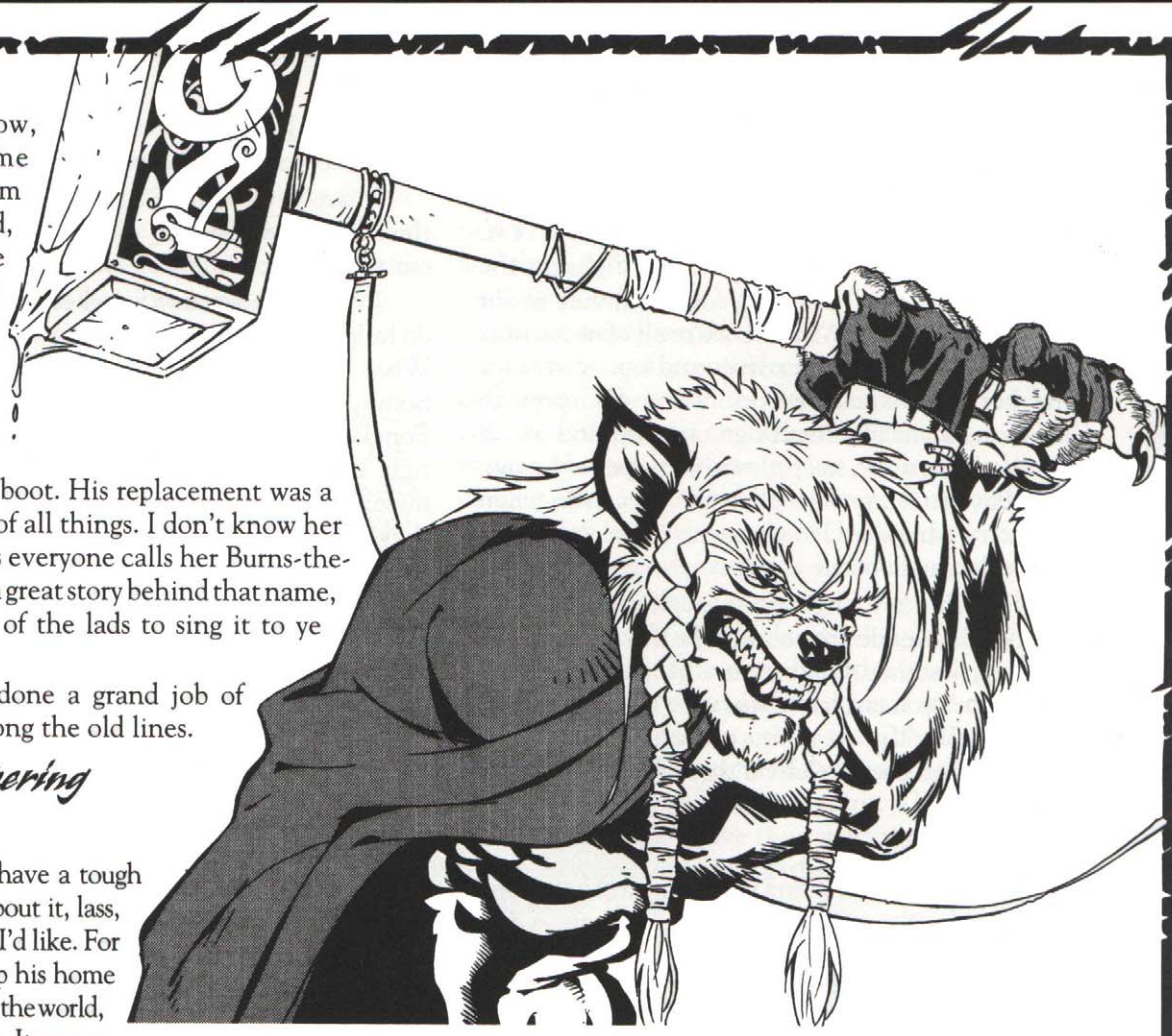
Now, a wee word o' warning to ye, lass. I'm a wee bit biased when I talk of the Brotherhood. You see, I'm a member. We're what you might call, in this day and age, a rapid reaction force. The group is dominated by Ahroun, with a smattering of the other auspices. We have our roots in the dark days after the birth of the Wyrm Howlers. The corruption of some of this land's protectors shifted the balance to the side of the bastard Wyrm, and blights were springing up left, right and center. The leeches were getting bolder and bolder and fomori were rife.

A good portion o' the tribe were up here, fighting the traitorous bastards and steadily driving them back towards the Mile Deep Loch. That meant many of our caerns across Britain and Europe where thinly defended, at a time when there were more beasties to fight than ever. Many caerns were hard pressed to defend themselves.

This couldn't last. Eventually, a wily old bitch who we remember as Herne's Daughter, came up with the idea of sharing resources. So, when a threat arose, a large band of Ahroun — one or two at the most from each caern that could briefly spare them — and others, modeling themselves after the the Wyld Hunt of old, would take a moon bridge to the nearest caern and deal with the Wyrmish beasties quickly and efficiently. When the Hunt rides out, the men quake in their beds and women hide their children.

The Brotherhood went through a difficult time a few years back. Too many of the young 'uns who joined the group focused on dealing with the Fundies — I'll tell you more of those later — instead of the real purpose of the Brotherhood. A clever bit of politics by the Fundies soon had too many Fianna believing that this was an oppressive English, freedom-fighting Irish situation, and the lads o' the two camps were at each other's throats before we knew it. Many quit in disgust.

When Malcolm "Wyrm-mocker" Sutton fell in a battle against some Wyrm Howlers, things changed for



the better. Now, don't get me wrong, Malcolm was a good lad, and a fearsome warrior, but he had no feeling for politics. A Full Moon to the core that one. Oh, and he was English tae boot. His replacement was a Frenchwoman, of all things. I don't know her human name, as everyone calls her Burns-the-Worm. There's a great story behind that name, but I'll get one of the lads to sing it to ye another night.

Still, she's done a grand job of rebuilding us along the old lines.

The Whispering Rovers

The Rovers have a tough life. Nae doubt about it, lass, theirs is not a life I'd like. For a Fiann to give up his home and Kin and travel the world, that's a big choice. It canna be comfortable for them. It seems tae me that loving your hearth and home is half of what being Fianna is all about. To give that up for a life on the road, well, that's tough.

They don't get much acceptance either. Like the Striders, they aren't always welcome, although I hear things are better over in the States, and in other parts of the world. The Garou of Europe are a territorial lot, and they don't always react well to a band of Fianna and their Kin turning up within spittin' distance of their bawn. Still, enough of our tribe get the wanderlust that there's a good number of Rovers all over the world. I even hear tell that some of them have gone into Russia now the hag is gone. Good luck to them.

Why are they "whispering"? That's a good question, lass. They're the eyes and the ears of the clan. I might like a wee drink and some comfort from a good looking Kin lass, but it doesn't mean that I'm not one of Gaia's warriors still. "Combat the Wyrm wherever it dwells and breeds," remember? Well, one of the problems the Children of Stag have is that we're home-loving bastards. If it's not within a day's run of home or a good bar, more often than not we don't really give a damn. Once too often, that insularity has come back an' butted us in the face. It's the job of the Rovers to keep the tribe from fallin' into that trap again.

Each Righ of the Rovers... Sorry, I had tae laugh. Y'see. there's a kiddies' comic about football called Roy of the Rovers that I used to read and... Never mind. No one ever said you Shadow Lords had a sense o' humor. Barman! Another drink for the humorless lassie! And a whisky chaser! And one fer yerself!

Each Rover Righ reports back to Tara, or wherever the Ard Righ is callin' home, with anything they see that may cause trouble for the tribe. You hear tales of wandering bands of Fianna turning up at the caerns of other tribes, just as things get tricky? Well, that's the work of the Rovers.

Grandchildren of Fionn

Now, here's a worthy wee group. It tends to be young lads and lassies who join the Grandchildren, a few summers into their life as Garou. Seeking Honor and Glory, they join together in small bands, and set out in search of a good ruck, wherever it's to be found. If any of the camps had a claim to be oldest, it's the Grandchildren or the Songkeepers. Both seem to be fundamental to who we are, if ye ken what I'm saying.

Our legends are full of stories of mighty warriors who set out to find adventure and battle the forces of evil. Swap the words "renown" and "Wyrm" in there, and

you'll see why so many bairns are keen to head away from home and fight the good fight elsewhere. Aye, to be sure some do it for money as well as glory, but then you have to buy you celebratory whisky somehow, right? It's not like they can take a still with them wherever they go?

Of course, there's more tae it than just a desire for a fight. Many Grandchildren often claim that their wanderings are directed by Stag himself. A glimpse of a stag in the Umbra or here will lead them tae wherever they are needed most. They'd define their role more as Stag's chosen heroes than as questing young warriors. Many of us would disagree, but there's no getting away from the success they achieve sometimes.

There are downsides, of course. There's been more than a few wee lost cubs fathered by Grandchildren, who hadn't realized that the cute lass they'd bedded that night was Kin. Hell, in this day and age, there's too many Kin who don't know their own heritage. And more than a few bands of Grandchildren tend to get the same sort of welcome from the local werewolves that the poor Rovers suffer. Still, when the Wyrm raises its ugly head, there's few that will turn away a good band of battle-hardened Garou.

There's strong links between the Dire and Rovers and the Grandchildren. More often than not, if they find a problem that needs dealing with that's nowhere near one of our caerns, it'll be a band of Grandchildren that pitches up ready tae deal wi' the problem. There's more than a few Grandchildren to be found in the Amazon, but many more have been called to Scotland or the Balkans in the last few years.

A few grizzled veterans stay Grandchildren their whole lives, but most eventually feel the pull o' a warm fire and a warmer Kinfolk body to while away the long winter nights. Still, it does our caerns' defenses no harm at all to have seasoned old warriors like ex-Grandchildren there.

Children of Dire

Now, it's difficult to talk of the Rovers without mentioning the Children o' Dire in the same breath. What the Rovers do for the lands o' man, the Dire do for the wild places. They're born of the land, and they see it as their duty to protect it. Truth be told, they're damn good at it too. A lupus understands the rhythms of nature far better than any homid or mule, however long we've lived in the Mother's arms.

Many of the lands we still hold, whether it's the Highlands, the west coast of Ireland, northern Spain or even the Appalachians, are thinly populated. As we tend to stick close to our human relatives, the lupus Garou and their Kin have to keep an eye on these areas for us. They can cover more territory in the same amount of time as any of the rest of us could do, and they're better suited to surviving for weeks away from the caern. They soon spot the patterns of disruption amongst the prey that show that the Wyrm is lurking, and then you ken what's next.

The other thing that the Dire are good at is teaching us ignorant bastards what it's like to be a wolf. We'd be hypocrites if we claimed to be close to our Kin and yet didn't spend time amongst the wolves. Wild wolves are a rarity still in most of our lands, so the only animals we can run with are protected and hidden Kin and the lupus themselves. There are a few "honorary" Dire — homids who have spent so long running with the Dire packs that they are almost accepted. Almost. They never accept metis, though. Who can blame them? Not like the deformed bastards truly belong anywhere pure.

Most Dire hold themselves apart from any particular caerns. They spend some of their time at one caern, before traveling as a pack for some weeks or months. Then they find another caern to call home for a while. This leads to some mistrust from the locals, who see them as a threat or disruptive element, but there ye go. Some people are just bloody stupid.

The Dire, like so many other lupus groups, from what I hear, are struggling wi' numbers a wee bit. We do what we can, as I've already told ye, but unless we can turn things around, we'll lose the Dire and that bodes ill for all.

The Tuatha De Fionn

Now, at some point this evening yer gonna ask me about the faeries, aren't you? Yeah, well done, hen. That's right up there wi' Irish werewolf in the misconceptions we have to deal with. Y'know what. I've never met a faerie, though I've seen a few, at a distance. Same's true for most of the lads.

Hang on. I didna say that we don't have any dealing with them. There's one group that specializes in dealing with the Good Folk, and they go by the name of the Tuatha De Fionn — that's Children of Fionn, to you lass. You see, we know and work with the fae, but we don't trust them. Any Fiann can tell you tales of their ancestors being deceived by the fae and nearly as many about being aided by them.

The fae are a strange and unpredictable bunch at the best of times. Oh, some of them are beautiful and some are great fighters, and they can be of help to us, but I wouldn't like to get caught up in one of their games. The Tuatha, probably the smallest of the camps, specialize in making the most of our old alliances, without it costing us too much. You can't join the Tuatha. Ye have tae be recruited by one of them who sees something in you — some would call it faerie blood, others would call

it madness — that allows you to deal with the Good Folk on something like equal terms.

They go through a long period of tutelage in the ways and lore of the fae, before they're taken to Arcadia Gateway, through the Umbra, for some basic encounters with them. Only then are they allowed to meet the Good Folk of this world. They end up a strange lot, the Tuatha, and few of us trust them entirely — not that I'll admit I said that once Moira arrives. Still, the things we learn and the aid we get from the fae makes tolerating these gits worthwhile.

On the side, they do their best to understand the other beasties that stalk the nights, too: the wizards and ghosties and Stag knows what else. Guid luck tae them, too. Rather them than me, hen. I've arranged for one of them tae have some chat wi' you later lass. I'm sure that'll be a barrel of laughs.

The Mother's Fundamentalists

Aye, now here's the tribe's dirty wee secret. The Fundies are the embarrassing cousins we try not to talk about. They're murdering bastards who sometimes seem more like the Get than us. Probably the result of intermingling of Kin or some such. These bastards tried to build support in the heart of the tribe a wee while ago by tying their banner to the cause of Irish republicanism. They did a pretty damn good job of it to. The stupider American members of the tribe — the ones that think the Troubles are as simple as the British oppressing the Irish — fell for it hook, line and sinker. The fact that the Fundies were calling themselves the Eire Fundamentalists back them was a clever move on their part, you're right lass.

The camp's numbers swelled, and they set to work on loyalist Northern Irish and the British. The Brotherhood was forced to try and protect our people, and got cast as lackeys of the British government. A few of the younger Garou got the wrong idea, and all of a sudden we had the Fianna mimicking the human's struggles. How bloody stupid was that? Then a few bands of Grandchildren pitched in tae protect their Irish caernmates and we had a nasty situation for a while.

What happened? Two things. The peace process in Northern Ireland, not to mention the Good Friday agreement, took a lot of the wind of their sails. Then, the problems up in Scotland started, and those people who really wanted to do something about the Wyrm had bigger targets than humans to worry about. The Eire Fundies began to wither away... but nothing good ever lasts.

Truth be told, these Fundie fuckers are back, under a new name and they still want to take us back to the Impergium. Now, we were never great supporters of the worst of the human culling back then. From the tales I hear, we protected our own Kinfolk and spent a token bit of time culling other folks. That's one of the reasons why our Kin covered so much of Europe once upon a time.

Most of all, though, I think we hate them 'cos they get on so well with the Get. Murderous bastards, the lot of 'em. Anyway, now they're back with a new name and a call to kill all humans. Homid Red Talons. Just what we need. And on that note, I'll bid you goodnight, hen. I'll meet you up tomorrow, and I'll bring a few pals.

Terrorism

There's no doubt that one thing that seems to be a common thread in the Celtic cultures that exist today, it's separatism. From the democratic campaign of the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) and Plaid Cmyru, to the terrorism of groups like the Basque separatists ETA in Spain and the mutually antagonistic Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Ulster Defense Force (UDF) in Northern Ireland, a fight for their view of nationality is almost a defining characteristic.

No wonder, then, that many **Werewolf** storytellers and players are drawn to stories told around these events and fights. If you want to pursue that line, there are a number of things that you should bear in mind. First of all, remember that in the eyes of the Garou, these are petty human struggles, only a minor symptom of the greater struggle against the Wyrm.

Secondly, remember that real people are killed all the time as a result of terrorism. During the preparation of this book, problems in the Northern Ireland peace process have led to bombs being used on the British mainland by a splinter group calling themselves the Real IRA. ETA killed people in Spain. The World Trade Center fell in the worst terrorist atrocity ever. People are dying in the real world as the result of these political differences. Don't belittle the deaths of innocent people by over-simplifying the politics at work.

We have unabashedly separated the Fianna from the mortal politics of Ireland in the revision of the tribe for just this reason.

The Litany

Morning lass. Glad you could join us. Here's the pack, ugly bastards that they are. Chuck over there's our Galliard and his songs are good enough that we forgive him for being American. Moira I mentioned yesterday. And the surly Welsh sheep-shagger goes by the name of Geraint Hunts-in-Holes, although we all

call him Gere. Now, is there anything you want tae ask about? Ah, the Litany. Chuck?

Chuck "Sings-of-Home" McCormack gets annoyed: Look you, don't you go questioning our commitment to the laws of the Garou. You won't find a tribe that is more staunchly committed to the Litany.

Garou Shall Not Mate With Garou

Makes sense, doesn't it? If we could breed with each other, we'd soon loose track of our other Kin, and that would be a damn shame. Without our family we have nothing to live for. Without family that aren't part of the fight, there's no one to wait home for you, that you don't want to disappoint by dying. That's a Mother's wisdom for you. We breed mules as a living reminder to not forget our Kinfolk.

Now, I'm not gonna lie to you, we birth our fair share of mules. OK, OK, more than our fair share. It's certainly common enough for two people who live and fight with one another to fall for each other. It's hard to keep those passions from becoming physical. Yeah, it's all very well saying "shag some Kinfolk senseless and get it out of your system" but sometimes that's not enough. When you really love someone, and the Fianna never do anything less, it's hard to even contemplate being with anyone else, let alone actually making the beast with two backs with them.

No, it's not the failure of the parents of the metis. It's the failure of the rest of us not to watch over each other, to stop these problems before they lead to sex and bastard babies, and if need be, to separate the two werewolves that can't keep their genitals to themselves. There's not a sept on the Mother that has so many Garou that she won't accept another Fiann amongst their number. A new home can always be found for some love-struck pup, well away from the object of their affections.

Metis conceived in casual passion? Doesn't happen. That's what our Philodox watch for at moots. I defy you to prove otherwise.

Geraint snorts: Yeah, right, Chuck. When did you go blind?

Combat the Wyrm Wherever It Dwells And Whenever It Breeds

Damn obvious. That's what we're here for. That's why we have Kin in the scabs, and some caerns there too. We might not like them much, but there's jobs to be done and sometimes the Gnawers and Walkers just aren't enough. Where the Wyrm goes, we go. When the job's done, we go home.

Respect the Territory of Another

Also damn obvious. Why waste resources fighting someone else's fight? Why distract ourselves from the enemy by fighting with the other tribes? When we go visiting, we respect the home of others and treat them as we would want out own homes treated.

Territory means more than just a place, though. We understand that it extends to breeding rights, too. You don't try it on with another Garou's mate, whether of this tribe or an-

other. The Kinfolk mates of humans or wolves are fair game, though. They should be damn proud to bring up a Garou cub, even if it isn't their own. You also stay well away from the Kinfolk of another tribe, unless you have their explicit permission to pursue the romance. We have enough fights over breeding rights within our own tribe, without getting into vendettas with others.

Accept an Honorable Surrender

This one only applies to other Garou. What do the minions of the Wyrm know about honor? Once you remember that, this is dead easy. There are so few of us left that losing anyone to internecine conflict is just dumb. Fight for dominance, sure. Just don't get pissed with them and do it to the death.

Rab adds: Hey, we fight when pissed all the time. What's wrong with fighting drunk?

Chuck replies: No, you Scots bastard, "pissed" means angry in civilized countries.

Submission to Those of Higher Station

Now, some would say that we have a problem with this part of the Litany. We're an unruly lot at the best of times, and never entirely happy under any leader. Now, I say that that's a good thing. By always chafing at the leash, as it were, we keep our alphas on their toes. We have no right to let them become complacent and there's a world of difference between testing an alpha and actually challenging her. We're doing them no service by being completely compliant. Sometimes we serve them better by giving them something to test their strength against.

The First Share of the Kill for the Greatest in Station

Never understood why this is in there. The Greatest in Station is in that position because he's the best able to take the first share. This one happens without us putting any effort in. Maybe it's just there as a warning to young pups not to get themselves into challenges that they can't deal with.

Ye Shall Not Eat the Flesh of Humans

Or, you don't eat your family or their friends. That means wolves, too, lest you forget. I know of a howled version of the Litany that makes that very clear. There are three good reasons for following this. First, eating human flesh drives you mad. No, thank you. I've seen the Wyrm Howlers. I'm not going there. Two, it really scares the shit out of the Kin if they hear you're doing it: bang goes any chance of getting laid. Three: From what I hear — and this is Galliard talk, don't think I hang out at the wrong restaurants — it tastes godawful. No amount of whiskey takes it away. Never had it happen to me. I pray to the Mother that I never get caught in the Thrall of Wyrm and start eating long pork by mistake.

Respect Those Beneath Ye — All Are of Gaia

Common sense again. We're not here to fight for our own sake, we're here to fight for the Mother and all the things in the world and the Umbra that are part of Her. It all comes back to remembering just what it is we are fighting for, which those dumb-ass Get never seem to remember. If everything is gone, but a few bloody Garou at the end of the battle, it will be a hollow victory indeed. No, we have to remember what we're fighting for.

The Veil Shall Not Be Lifted

Well, duh. We're fast, we're strong, but we're probably outnumbered hundreds of thousands to one by the humans, if not more. Yes, they're scared of us. But like us, they know to fight and kill the things that scare them. If ever the Veil was lifted, even I don't relish the opportunity to fight hundreds of heavily armored humans all at once. That's not my idea of a good way to die for the Mother. What do you think I am? A Red Talon? The Veil's there for a damn good reason: It lets us go about our business without the humans getting in the way, and that's a darn good thing.

Do Not Suffer Thy People to Tend Thy Sickness

Probably the single hardest part of the Litany to keep. Your family and your pack naturally want to care for you and look after you. That's part of what being a Fiann is about. It can be really hard to say "no" to them and take yourself off somewhere to die: either in battle or alone with the Mother. However, if you love them, you should do it. We have tasks enough in these last days, without having to care for those who won't be able to fight when it really counts. We're a warm-hearted lot. It'd be a crime to take advantage of that.

The Leader May Be Challenged at Any Time During Peace

"May be"? Should be, more like! Alphas should be strong and they shouldn't be in place if they're not. Now we all have good times and bad times. Constant challenges make sure only those who are at their best stay as alphas. If they're having a bit of a ropy patch, then it's best that they step down until things are back together for them. And if their replacement continues to grow stronger? Well, that's all to the good of the tribe. Look, dominance isn't a once and for all deal, it's a constant battle that keeps the family strong.

And besides, we all like a good fight. I've won a decent fetish or two betting on some dominance battles.

The Leader May Not Be Challenged During Wartime

Common sense yet again. Fighting with each other when there's any enemy to take down just wastes your energy. Now, as a tribe we've made this mistake once two often. Why do you think our Galliards spend half their bloody lives telling the stories of great rivalries between two Garou that always have a tragic ending? To stop people making the same bloody mistake again, that's why. Nothing worse than a Fiann who doesn't know when to pick his moment, if you ask me, and nothing more certain to put a big old grin on one of the Wyrm's faces.

Ye Shall Take No Action That Causes a Caern to Be Violated

Or I'll smash your fucking head in. You don't let the bad guy into your home. It's really as simple as that. Now, caerns are far more than homes, they are the sacred groves of the Mother and the place where we can feel Her love, and anger, most clearly. Without them, we lose our links to Her and our sense of family. This is the one crime for which there can be no atoning in life. A violator of this part of the Litany who is unrepentant is put to death quickly, lest she taint any of the rest of us. Someone who begs Stag's forgiveness may be granted a quest by him — one that offers the miserable cur the chance to redeem herself in noble sacrifice.

Oh, and allowing a caern to be violated by inactivity is just as bad. That's why we've had to take caerns off the hands of those other tribes who were unable to defend them properly in the past. We didn't like doing it, but we knew that it was our duty to our Mother and we took comfort in that.

Moira adds: This goes double for the other things out there in the night. No bloodsucker, wizard or other thing gets anywhere near one of our caerns. If anyone tells them about one, we'll hunt the traitor and their friend down.

Geraint mutters: Not all of us agree with what happened in the West, whatever Chuck says. Bloody Americans.

Around the World

Ireland

You may laugh about us Americans but at least our hearts are usually in the right place. You know, whenever a Fiann gets plastered in some dive somewhere in the world and starts getting all misty-eyed about the old country, usually they mean Ireland. Now, Stag's Children may have had many homes, but few of them mean as much to us as Ireland. Sure, only a small proportion of the tribe have ever set foot there, let alone been born there, but somehow we've tied up our identity with that island.

Several of our most important caerns are in the old country — Tara and the Tri-Spiral are probably the most prominent, but there are plenty more. It's the only country in the world that we can say is Fianna territory without fear of contradiction. That's not to say there aren't werewolves of other tribes there. They're just in a minority.

There's plenty going on there to keep us busy, too. Yeah, I do mean the Troubles, if you want to call them that. I could use choicer words. This isn't the time and the place to go into the politics of it, but if you think it's as simple as conquering English and oppressed Irish, you're an idiot. Much of it is driven by sectarian religious strife, between Catholics and Protestants. Throw in imperialist history, nationalistic dreams and a few extremists, and you've got a nasty mix.

Now, it's true that a few young Fianna have gotten themselves involved in this sort of nonsense. It nearly destroyed some of our oldest camps, that did, until some inspired Ragabash hit on a way of shaking them out of it. She took them on a tour of the sites of sectarian violence in Ireland, and the UK mainland. When any Fiann worth his salt sees the Wyrm monstrosities feeding on the misery and terror created, they soon change their minds about involving themselves in the humans' struggle.

A few years ago, you could rely on Tara to send the forces you needed to deal with the mess left behind after a shooting or a bombing, but nowadays, with that idiot in charge, it's up to the local caerns to get things sorted out. A few people have put forward the idea that the troubles are the Wyrm's way of getting a foothold in our homeland. I don't believe that. The Troubles are something the humans do all on their own. The Wyrm just takes advantage.

The United Kingdom

The UK, or Britain, or Albion or whatever the hell you want to call it used to be all ours, until the bastard Get came in with their Saxon Kin and made themselves at home.

England

The southern part of England is wrapped up tight in the Weaver's webs, and we spend more time fighting her than the Wyrm down there. Have you ever stepped sideways in the heart of London? I wouldn't recommend it. I hear that there's a city caern hidden in one of the parks in the center of the city, but after a nasty fight with a leech some years back, the locals are damn secretive about exactly where it is. Can't say as I blame them. It can't be easy defending it.

You head north, into the Midlands and you're into Wyrm territory. The legacy of the heavy industry that used to be there has left many areas a patchwork of Wyrm pits and other nasty shit. We and the Get work reasonably well together there, simply because we have no damn choice. It's a tough fight at the best of times.

England's pretty much ours these days. Sure, there are Get about, but who gives a stuff about them? Oh, and there used to be some Fangs as well, but the Wyrm got them. Last time we'll have to drag their butts out of the fire.

Wales

The Welsh Fianna are something of a law unto themselves. The Dyn a drowyd yn flaidd, as they call themselves, have a distinctly different culture from the rest of the tribe. While they retain our love of song and music, their Galliards tend to have a more somber bent than ours. Some have accused the whole group of being on the edge of Harano, others of being all Ragabash, but I think that's overstating the case. From the little time I managed to spend in one of their caerns some miles north east of Abertawe, I think they celebrate their life as Garou as much as the rest of us. They just tinge it with a melancholy that comes from the knowledge of their eventual doom.

If I interpreted their stories right, and that might not be the case, for they seem to speak an archaic version of the Garou tongue, they believe that they were here before the rest of the Fianna, and they will be there long after we have gone. Then the world will become something else, and Luna will choose them as her champions once more. Yeah, I'm summarizing here, but their legends and views of the world are distinctly different from ours. For them, it's enough to protect the land they have and their Kin. The Apocalypse is a battle to be fought by others. As a result, they're very insular, holding caerns in the heart of Wales, which is thinly populated at best.

Geraint splutters with laughter: You've fallen for a few lies, there, boyo. Now while it's been a little while since I've been home, I can tell you that not all the Welsh Fianna are Dyn a drowyd yn flaidd. They're more of a small, regional camp centered around a few caerns in the center and north of Wales. The rest of us are little different from the mainstream Fianna.

Perhaps the biggest problems we face are the legacy of the long years of mining in Wales. The whole country's riddled with mines, a good number of which have been grabbed by the Wyrm or the Howlers. They're hard to find at the best of times, so many of our septs make a point of checking out abandoned pits as and when they can. It's a dangerous game, though.

Silver Tara

In the days between the coming of the Garou to Eire and the coming of Christianity, there were three great fortresses called Tara. Of Iron Tara, the palace of human kings, nothing more than grass-mantled mounds remain. Another, also known as "High Tara," was the seat of power of the Daoine Sidhe; at the time of the Shattering, it slipped into the mists of the Dreaming. The third, variously called Middle Tara, Silver Tara ("Airgetteamhair") or simply Tara, is the seat of the High King of the Fianna Tribe of the Garou. Tara is the spiritual heart of the tribe, a caern of Honor devoted to both Stag and Danu, and the tribes most sacred place.

The complex that is Tara sits atop a hill rising to 200 feet above the surrounding plain. Seven great earth-and-stone ramparts circle the hill. Each of the seven gates is faced with silver and hung with the heads of vanquished foes. The main palace is surrounded by several smaller (yet still quite large) outbuildings, including guest quarters and storehouses. A round tower provides a home for any Corax that might choose to visit.

The main building is a massive 2-story edifice comprised of five great stone-and-timber halls, each bedecked with gorgeous tapestries and trophies (weapons, banners, skulls...). Even the massive timbers are decorated with exquisite knotwork.

The northern hall, called Ulster Hall, is an assembly area that has oft echoed with songs of battle. Connacht Hall (West) is an equally impressive great banquet hall capable of seating 200. The Leinster Hall (East) and Munster Hall (South) are devoted to games, music, and workshop space. The largest, Meath Hall — located in the center — is the meeting place of the High King's court. Each hall is lavish, with tapestries and trophies adorning the walls, and fine knotwork carved into each stone and timber.

Tara is difficult for the uninvited to find. Tara is hidden by numerous Gifts and faerie glamours of exceeding power, overlaid by many magical spells both ancient and fresh. Further, the totems of the caern are powerful protection in their own right. Thus it is that Tara has never been seen on an aerial photo, and that no English lord or real estate agent has ever thought to claim the property for development. It is the rarest of occurrences for any to cross the bawn save Fianna or trusted allies.

Should an enemy navigate through the magical barriers, there are other alarms. For instance, set into the walls of Meath Hall are four alcoves filled with four heads of fallen heroes, one for each of the four directions. On the edge of the bawn of Tara, four small stone caerns cover the skulls of four more heroes, facing outward to the four directions. Should an enemy cross the bawn, the head representing that direction shrieks and wails, warning the warriors of impending attack.

The great assembly of the righs occurs once every three years, but all the great rites and moots are observed, and there's never a night without stories and song. For many Fianna, a night at Tara is a high point of their lives. The storyteller who is asked to perform finds it both a great honor and a challenge — after all, with some of the greatest living Fianna — and sometimes fae! — as your audience, one has to excel just to impress. In the hall most nights is the eldest of all Fianna, the High Songkeeper Barr O'Callahan. He's collected tribal lore for well over a hundred years; Galliards from around the world come to seek lore and trade stories from his still-nimble lips, and not just from the Fianna either.

Non-Fianna Garou are exceptionally rare in Tara, usually visiting in times of War or other crises. A few Silver Fangs have supped in the Connacht Hall, as have the occasional Child of Gaia, Silent Strider, and Stargazer. The Fianna say, with a touch of pride, that no Get or Shadow Lord ever set foot inside the bawn of the King's Palace. One Black Fury found her way to Tara, an event still talked about with a mixture of humor and consternation. Of the other shifters, only the Corax are present; always Fianna-friends, the raven folk make invaluable scouts and lorekeepers — not to mention someone for New Moons to blame pranks on. Two or three are always in residence.

As fae and Fianna are linked by blood and oaths, it's to be expected that the Fair Folk are often seen around the great halls. Since Bron took the Torc of Kingship, emissaries from many houses and kingdoms have been welcomed to Tara. To the Fianna as a whole, the most notable fae is a mountain of a troll known as Niall of the Hundred. When Bron became Ard Righ, Niall entered the great hall and offered himself as the king's bodyguard, of all things. Bron politely refused, saying his own pack of Ahroun would take offense. Exactly three moons later, Niall again appeared in the hall, this time swinging a dozen Black Spiral heads above his head on an enormous chain. Bron decided his Ahroun would just have to get over it, and agreed to Niall's offer. Niall bound himself to the protection of his new lord with the strongest oaths (those in the hall swear the very earth shook in recognition of the troll's pronouncements). No Fianna knows why the troll chose such an unprecedented guardianship, but anyone not daunted by the diamond-tough armor and monstrous broadaxe would still think twice before crossing the seven-foot, rock-hard giant that wears and wields them. Still, there are quiet grumblings about the influence of the unpredictable and often dangerous fae on the High King.

Scotland

Rab, I don't dare talk about your homeland with you here. You take the floor, you randy old wolf.

Rab holds forth: Thank you, ye emasculated pup. Now, Scotland, the land where ye stand, has always been a problem to us. Right now, it's because the bastards we kicked out of the joint are coming back, and in numbers. We lost a caern or two to them in recent years, and no I'm not telling you which ones and when, lass, so stop looking hopeful. We'll be taking them back ourselves, thank you, and you'll be helping us do just that tonight.

Anyway, we think we've figured out what it is that the Spirals want. Y'see, Scotland is the heart of the oil industry in Europe. There's been a whole series of little "accidents" of late, and I think they're trying to wake up the Wyrm beasties we put to sleep centuries ago by turning the country into something they'd appreciate, if you get my drift, lassie. The one thing that really gives me the willies is the thought that they'll wake the Árd Cruimh Beithíoch, a fucking nightmare of a Wyrmspawn the songs say we fought not long after the Howlers fell. Now, the packs that watched the Mile Deep Loch, the last bastion of the Howlers in Scotland, and the only place we weren't able to truly cleanse, have been missing for a wee while, so you'll understand why we're getting so jumpy about the Highlands. I think you'll see a lot of Fianna blood spilt in Scotland in the coming months — and a lot more from Wyrmish bastards.

Europe

Thanks for that, Rab. Now, lass, I've no doubt you know more about what's happening on the continent than we do, but there's a few things worth noting from this Fiann's perspective. The first is that small numbers of Fianna and Kin can be found all over the continent. It was once all our territory, and there are always a few die-hards who never give up their territory. Us Rovers keep in contact with them and let them know what's happening in the wider world. Most are more caught up in the affairs of their sept than those of the tribe, though.

Northern France

We actually hold a few caerns in Britanny in northern France. Not many, but there's enough of our blood left in some of the people of the region to birth enough Garou each generation to keep them secure. The area's fairly rural, which suits the Fianna there. Now, it's nominally Fang territory in France, but I got to tell you lass, they're losers to a wolf. Whatever respect we had for them fell when the British Fangs fell, and now we're doing our best to make sure no one suffers when the French guys follow them.

To be honest, I have a lot of time for the French Fianna. They tend to be a bit more, well, considered in their enjoyment of life. Less quantity, more quality, that sort of thing.

Rab sneers: You mean they don't screw around?

Chuck replies: Gaia, no. They do screw around, they're just a bit more picky about who they do the dirty with.

Northern Spain

Yeah, believe it or not there are Spanish Fianna. The Basque people have a link to the Celts of old and a few of them carry our blood, too. We hold a few caerns scattered across the country. To be honest, the Spanish Fianna have fallen pretty far from the tree. The same respect for the life we have is there, but you wouldn't recognize many of their traditions. I'm sure that they separated from the rest of us a long time ago, maybe before many of our current ways of behaving evolved. I'm guessing, mind. They actually involve Kin in the rites far more than we would ever consider. Still, it works for them, so I shouldn't knock it.

North America

Now, you guys are probably gonna get pissy about this. but if Ireland is the tribe's spiritual home, America is its real home. I'm sure there are more of us in the US and Canada than there are in the whole of the UK. Sorry, guys, them's the facts. We can be found in all parts of the continent, with particular concentrations in Appalachia and around Boston in Massachusetts.

There's a healthy number of Fianna-only caerns all across the continent, many of which we've held since the days of the Old West. There's also at least one Fiann in most caerns, even some of the urban ones. I don't know what it is about us Irish Fianna, but we breed like rabbits. We're pretty passionate about our heritage and culture in the US, too. Fianna caerns are a riot of kilts, knotwork and traditional Celtic ways. Maybe it's because we have to fight harder over there to hold onto our cultural identity, but our caerns probably meet most non-Fianna's idea of Celtic better than the British ones do.

Rab mutters: And bad Oirish accents. Bloody Plastic Paddies.

Chuck laughs: You can mock all you like, Rab, but the British used to dress up like Romans at the height of the Empire. For some reason successful human cultures always seek affirmation from an idealized past. The Garou that breed with them tend to pick up the same habits. And you're not going to try to argue that the Americans aren't the most successful race on earth?

Rab snipes: Yeah, but they only distill their whisky once. We Scots, impatient as we are, wait for

two distillations. And those Irish whiskeys are distilled three times. Aaah, smooth fire.

South America

Thanks for that lesson, Rab. Anyway, let's move on to South America. There's not a whole load of Fianna down there, but there's a few. Mainly, our youngsters are drawn to the Amazon War in the hope of winning some glory for themselves. The fact that none of them seem to have risen to any position of prominence is down to that Fenris bastard Golgol Fangs-First. There's nothing I hate more than a bigot, and I hear that he carries the anti-Fianna prejudices of his people to excess. Too many fine youngsters of the tribe have died fighting his war for him. If I had my way, I'd stop any more of us joining the fight. It's not as if we're short of battles to fight elsewhere.

Other Places

Over the last century or so, we've spread. The British conquered half the globe, and we went with them. You'll be surprised where a group of Kinfolk and even the odd caern of Fianna will turn up. Even if we're not there in sufficient numbers to hold a caern, there are few places in the world where you won't find a Fiann or two.

Asia

I have one word to say to you that sums up Asia for us: Firehair. The Firehair family has lived in and around Beijing for centuries. They're descendants of Irish sailors — or was it Spanish? — who settled there in the 17th century and who have never bothered to come home. Like all of us, they're a sociable bunch and they are responsible for what little we know of the Eastern Fera. Last time I met up with one of them on the West Coast of the USA, she mentioned that they've begun to talk to the Eastern fae, which are called *hsien* or something.

Moira shows interest: Really? Is it worth me getting in contact?

Chuck resumes: Yeah, I'd say so. Anyway, apart from them, Asia is pretty much a Fianna-free zone. That's why all the shifters there are so goddamn serious, I guess.

Africa

Africa, on the other hand, is pretty much devoid of Fianna on an organized basis. That's not to say that there aren't some of us there — a few Kin descended from colonial Brits who headed out there back in the UK's expansionist days give birth to Fianna once in a while, but we're hardly numerous on the continent. Probably for the best, too, I hear; the only Garou who manage to hang out there for more than a few moons without getting killed by the angry local Fera are Red Talons and Silent Striders. And that tends to tell me that a werewolf tribe that actually has some numbers going for it wouldn't be welcome in the least.

Australia

We're much more numerous in Australia. More than a few of our Kin ended up, umm, how can I put this? They were given free passage by the British courts down there and spent a few years, umm, serving the crown. Of course, many more followed in later years, so we're well represented down there. It's a situation very similar to America, without the particular concentrations of Fianna Kin. We're scattered across the continent in a fairly even way and you're as likely as not to find a couple of Fianna at any particular caern.

Does that mean that we were involved in the death of the Bunyip? Yeah, well, we probably were. While it's a loss that they've gone, I can't help but think that they must have deserved it. I mean, were our ancestors any more bloodthirsty than we are? I doubt it. They had their reasons. If only more of them were preserved in song, that's what I say.

Relationships

Rab speaks:

Thanks, Chuck. You're a decent guy for a Yank. Now lass, I'll hand ye over to Moira for the rest of the morning. As soon as you and she are done, we're off back to the caern. We'll be heading out soon, and there's hard work tae be done. Keep it short, Moira.

Other Tribes

Moira McLeish speaks:

Thank you, Rab. Now, if ye can keep yer gob shut for the next hour, we can have a sensible talk, girl to girl. Now, I'm sure you could teach me a thing or two about politics. We Fianna wear our hearts on our sleeves, so we're not great at it. We tend to speak as we think and think as we find. That makes life with the other tribes a wee bit heated at times, but we get by.

Black Furies

Fierce ladies, these. Nobody can deny their lust for battle, passion and reverence for their history. They may have spread all over the world, but they still know where their homeland is, and that we can respect. Hell, they even watch over their Kinfolk with a determination that puts a few Fianna to shame. The problem is that we can't help but feel that they miss half the picture. Men are fine things, truth be told, and I hate to go for more than a week or so without their company. Cutting one sex out of the equation means you miss half of the picture. As a mother loves her sons and daughters equally, so does Gaia. The Furies would do well to remember this.

Bone Gnawers

Before I say anything about the Gnawers, and just so you don't get the wrong idea, I just want to point out that as far as we're concerned, if you ain't doing things with your Kin and Mother Gaia in mind, you ain't doing anything worthwhile. If you've got that, you'll understand where we're coming from on the Bone Gnawers. I know a lot of the other tribes look down on them, but they take the fight to the heart of the scabs and find the hope in every city. They, as well as we do, know that there's Kin of every tribe in the scabs, more or less. We like to keep an eye on our Kin, wherever they be. When in town, we hang out with the Bone Gnawerss. Simple as that. They're welcoming, they're not stuck up, they'll help you out, and you'll hear some great stories round their fires. Shame about the muck they call a good drink, though.

Children of Gaia

I kinda like the Gaians. I mean, much of what they stand for I can agree with. Unity between the tribes? About bloody time. We're running out of time to sort that out, y'know, and any help on that mission is welcome. That's why you're here. A bit more understanding? Aye, the Garou Nation would be better for that. They like a smile, a song and a joke as much as the rest of us, and I love them dearly for it. They're welcome in my home, such that it is, anytime.

But, well, umm, they're kinda, well, wet, y'know? No passion to them. They remind me of the sissy types we used to kick around at school. To them love is the gentle, warming flame of a torch. To us it's the blazing heat of the bonfire. Get some good whisky in their belly to give them some fire, and the right Kin to warm their beds at night, and we'd make real Garou out of them yet. Truth be told, I wouldn't mind spending a few nights with some of their Kin myself. He can put his healing hands all over me, anytime.

Get of Fenris

My Da always told me that if you haven't got anything good to say, don't say anything at all. OK, I do have something good to say. If you're in a fight, there's no one better to have at you back. We learnt that centuries ago when we took down the Wyrm Howlers together. I just think well... they're a load of misguided bastards who are in danger of doing more harm than good. Now, as you've guessed, I have a problem with the Get. Most of us do. It's not just down to the fact they stole half our caerns in England once upon a time. No, it runs a little deeper than that.

Yeah. we're here to fight. That's why the Mother gave birth to us, right? But fighting isn't an end in its own right. The fiercest warrior is one who fights for her home, her love and her people. If she knows she goes home to a good meal, a better drink and a warm, sexy bod to keep the nights fun, she'll give everything to tear apart that bastard on the battlefield and walk home with all her bits in working order. There's too few of us left to throw away our lives needlessly. The Get need to get off their bloody Warrior Thug trip and remembers why we're fighting this bloody battle.

Yeah, they're good warriors and some of their Kin are as sexy as fuck, but would you have anything to talk to them about in the morning? I don't think so. Miserable bastards to a man. That includes the women.

Glass Walkers

Now, while I have a world of time for the Bone Gnawers, I can't quite summon up the same respect for the Walkers. Why? Well, while the Gnawers can find the Wyld in even the most Weaverish of place, the Glass Walkers just don't seem to be able to see beyond the Weaver's webs. We've lost too many of our ancestral lands to the bitch spider's webs, and the Walkers just go on helping her. I gather you were in Glasgow the other day — well you can see why we have issues with the Glass Walkers. Same with London, if you've ever been there. A festering scab of a place if ever I saw it and the fact we lost a good few packs there some years back doesn't help my opinion. Now, if the Glass Walkers just stopped fantasizing about jumping the Weaver's bones and got back to using her tools to heal the damage done to the Wyld, then we'd welcome them with open arms. But they just don't seem to be doing it.

Red Talons

A Talon can sing a beautiful howl, full of loss, anger and rage. Running with them brings the Mother's lands alive to you like no other experience can. They guard their kinfolk with a passion that exceeds our own. And they fight the Wyrm with a dedication that matches the Get's. What's not to admire?

Well, there's their hatred of humanity for one. Their inability to recognize humans as Kinfolk has brought us to blows with the Talons more than once, particularly in Spain. It's a bit like the Furies, I suppose. They have their own little role in the song, but they've become so obsessed by it, that they've forgotten how other howls build with it to make something greater.

I certainly think the Talons have a role to play in society, that of reminding some of the tribes how important the part of us that is wolf is to our battles. However, it falls to us, who never forgot that, to remind them that the Mother made us half human for a reason. It's not an easy task, but we've never shirked from a hard task.

Shadow Lords

Now, please don't take this the wrong way, but we haven't always had the best of relationships. It's just that we Fianna are a pretty straightforward, cards-on-the-table sort of bunch. And you Shadow Lords, well, you play things very close to your chest, don't you? I wouldn't go as far as to say that we don't trust you, because we know that you're Garou and as opposed to the Wyrm as we are, it's just that, well, we'd prefer you to be a bit more open about what you're doing. And yeah, there's some history between our tribes.

Still, Konietzko has gone a long way to undoing that damage. There's no doubt that he's achieved some pretty major victories against the Wyrm and that he's keeping our Galliards busy as he directs new campaigns against the Wyrmholes that litter Europe. Truth be told, he's the reason we're talking to you know. Yeah, many of the elders still wouldn't trust him as far as they could throw him, but some of the rest of us respect that fact that he's willing to do whatever needs doing to get the job done. You can't argue with that.

Silent Striders

I've spent many weeks in the company of Striders, and I've rarely regretted it. Like a Whispering Rover, they tell tales of places that I may never see and battles that I will never experience. They're free with their tale telling, too, seeing it as fair return for our hospitality, and that's a good attitude in my eyes. Aye, I have time for the Striders. It can't be an easy life acting as the messengers of the Garou.

They can't seem to settle down, which is a shame. I'm lead to understand that it's not a decision of their choosing, and that's a powerful shame. Stag knows what they did to deserve such a fate, but surely nothing short of giving in to the Wyrm could rate a punishment so severe that it has gone on this long? I pity them, and would go out of my way to make them feel welcome, for at least a while.

That said, many of us don't trust them. Why? Well, it's their totem, Owl. The owl has connotations of evil and bad luck in our lore, and more often than not a Strider arrives in our caerns with evil and bad luck close on their heels. You can see why some of us make the connection, can't you?

Silver Fangs

It saddens me heart, but I think their time is past. We've watched the noble houses collapse, the ambassadors to Tara grow ever more demanding and arrogant and the whole tribe lose their grip on the good fight. Now, it may be true that King Albert What's-his-face in America is doing some good stuff, but he's probably the last good leader the tribe will produce. If it's true that all the Garou that will fight in the Final Battle have already been born, well then, I doubt a Silver Fang will lead us onto the plain of the Apocalypse.

The thing that doesn't sit easy with me is that they just expect to rule us. They don't expect to have to prove it — they just think it should come naturally. Well, frankly, they can fuck off and come back when they've done something that'll make the Galliards sit up and take notice. We respect a good king, who rules well. We loathe a tyrant who demands our obedience rather than wins it.

Stargazers

You don't run out on your family.

Well, what more do you want me to say? Family is everything, and they ran out on us. Truth be told, I wasn't keen on them to start with. Their way of self-restraint and airy-fairy mysticism wasn't for me. Reminds me too much of the sort of nonsense some of the yanks — no offense, Chuck — try and claim is our Kin's culture. Let 'em go. It's not like they were much use while they were here.

Uktena

Look, I don't want to sound like a bigot, but the more time you spend around a bunch of people, the more you come to understand them. Often, you come to identify with them. Nothing wrong with that you might say. True enough, when you spend you time around kith and Kin. When you spend you time guarding the Wyrm's fallen minions and other, stranger things, well.... Do I need to spell this out for you? They do a job that needs doing, but they do it to excess. We split stewardship of the bound spirits and recaptured Wyrm Howler caerns in Scotland with the Get, so as not to leave any of us too exposed to the things within. The Uktena don't share their burden. Therefore, they're a risk.

Wendigo

Yeah, well. They don't like us. I mean, they really don't like us. As in: won't talk to us, won't work with us, want nothing to do with us. Yeah, we have history. So what? That was centuries ago. No one who was alive then is alive now. We're willing to move on, if they're willing to forget. Maybe they should take the time to listen to some of our songs. They weren't exactly doing a good job of looking after those caerns we took. We tried to help, and they didn't like it one bit. Given the choice between leaving a caern in their hands and seeing it fall, or taking it from them, I know what choice I'd make. There's a lot that isn't talked about from the days of the old West. Perhaps it's about time we did start talking about it again, so we could start healing these old wounds. We're doing our bit. When are they going to start doing theirs?

The Fera

Of course, we're not the only of the Mother's children in the world. Too many of them have left Her family and turned to the Wyrm, but the others survive. They're our bastard cousins at best, but a few of them might be able to help us out in the coming days. Just don't expect a warm family reunion anytime soon, lass.

Ananasi

Now, from what I've heard, the spider folk are a curious lot. My guess is that it's down to being part spider — I mean, spiders eat their young and each other after sex and stuff, don't they? That's one warped set of values tae try and work into your mind, isn't it? That's probably why we have no idea what purpose they serve. I mean, everyone knows we're the Mother's warriors and the Corax are Her eyes, etc, etc. What do the spiders do?

One thing I do know for sure is that the buggers get everywhere and that they're really hard to keep track of. I can't say as I've heard many tales of the Ananasi, but those I've come across are from all over the world. So, they're widespread and we don't know a lot about them. It's not exactly comforting, is it lass?

Chuck growls: I heard they all served the Wyrm these days.

Moira refutes that: Not what I hear, laddie. As far as I know, they're more likely to be found serving the Weaver.

Rab muses: Maybe there's more than one type, serving different aspects? Dunno really. I'll judge them as I find them. Not like I've had to yet.

Bastet

I'm rather afraid that they're finally gone from the world. A year or so back, we found a whole load of werecat corpses up near Caithness. Now, I'm glad that they died fighting the Wyrm Howlers, but I'm not sure I'm happy that they lost so badly. More than one pack has come back from the Highlands with reports of Bastet fighting for the other side. I hope they haven't followed the Howlers into the Wyrm's embrace.

Now, I hear the werekitties are more numerous in other parts of the world: South American and Africa, apparently. I'm sure they do a good job down there. Me? I couldn't care less really. I've never met a live one and I can't see what use they'd be to us anyway.

Rab butts in: Well, now, you say that, lass, but I was there when we found the bodies in Caithness. If all of them fight as hard as that lot did before they died, they might just be some use to us after all. I ain't volunteering to go looking for them, though.

Chuck adds: Well, I've met Garou who definitely claim to have met the cat-Fera in other parts of the world: South America, Africa, those sorts of places. I imagine they're pretty pissed with us, but as long as they stay where they belong, I really don't care.

Corax

We and the Corax are old friends. The sight of one of the feathered lads dropping in at a moot to let some juicy tidbit drop warms our heart, because we know that there's a good brawl in the offing. We're not bad at rooting out the Wyrm on our own, but the Corax beat us hands down. Nae doubt about it. They can sniff, or whatever the hell they do, out the Wyrm better than any other creature on the face of Mother Gaia. If you want to keep up with your Litany commitments, listen to a Corax whenever you can.

We didn't just turn a blind eye to the Corax during the War of Rage, we actively protected them. There's usually one or two in and out of Tara all the time. All the best Ard Righs know that listening to them is the key to success for the tribe. I wonder if Bron's finally twigged to that yet?

Geraint muses: What Moira didn't mention is that they're hopeless in a fight. That breeds resentment in some idiots, but most of us know better.

Gurahl

They turned on us, right? Way back when, they sold us out to the Wyrm and we hunted them down and wiped out the lot of them, like we should have done with the Howlers. That's a story our bards still sing with pride. Bears are fearsome creatures when roused, but even they can fall to a pack of Fianna working together. There were some mighty deeds done and some great songs that came out of those fights. The War of Rage became a terrible thing, and no mistake, but there's little doubt in my mind that the Gurahl deserved everything that they got.

Rab supports her: Aye, they betrayed us and they died. Pity more of them Fera didn't take notice.

Geraint adds: The Mother might yet surprise us all, though. I've heard some tales....

Mokole

Okay. Not sure I can help you on this one. Chuck?

Chuck helps out: Well, I couldn't say that I've ever met one, but I do hear from friends I trust that the Dragon-Changers are still in the world. I once heard a Galliard sing a song of the world before our own, of a time quite unlike anything our own legends or those of the humans and it was a thing of aching beauty that brought me to tears. Stop the sniggering, Rab, or I'll tear you several new ones.

I asked the bard where she'd learnt the song and she said that she'd picked it up during a spell in the Amazon, picking at the Wyrm's forces there with her pack. She got evasive when I pressed her for details, but she did say that there are things out there with memories that make ours look like the recollections of a goldfish. I'd bet a hundred bucks that was a Mokolé song. Any takers?

Nagah

Weresnakes? You're kidding, right? This is some sort of obscure "St. Patrick driving the snakes from Ireland" joke? Look, I've heard too many half-cocked tales of Fera that were supposedly wiped out in the War of Rage to believe in weresnakes. I can believe in the dragon folk, but serpentine shifters? You'll be telling me that there were werepigs next.

Rab adds: Weregerbils! Werefrogs! Weresnakes! Not a bloody chance.

Nuwisha

Oh, Gaia. The Nuwisha. Why on earth did the Mother create an entire race of Ragabash? Does every single thing we do need to be pulled apart and questioned? I dinna know how to deal wi' them most of the time, lass, and there's the truth. In their favor, you never get more than one at once and when they decide to take on the Wyrm's forces you can enjoy the look of surprise on the fomor's face as he dies. They also like a laugh, a drink and a dance as much as any of us.

The problem? Well, they're so....

Rab dives in: Annoying? Damn right, hen. That's why I love 'em, especially the Old Man. They're always a laugh and they stop people like you from taking yourself too seriously.

Ratkin

Dirty little fuckers. These bastards breed in the sewers faster than rabbits on Viagra. There's no counting how many of them there are down there. Now, I'd normally not have a problem with this, other than they have a real hard-on for killing off humans. When random slaughter of our Kinfolk is concerned, I tend to lose my sense of humor. A lot of the time I'd be right behind the rats, if only they'd be a little more discriminating in choosing their targets.

Rab adds: Aye, they're wee bastards all right, but the longer I spend in some scabs, the more I agree with them. The sooner they wipe London from the face of the earth, the better, that's what I say.

Rokea

Well now, weresharks sound as if they should be up there with weresnakes, don't they? Well, I have it on good authority that they're real. A Rover I knew a wee while back gave me some chat. One of the things he told me was that he once hitched a ride across the Atlantic in a small yacht. They picked up an SOS from another craft and went to investigate. Y'know what he found down below, well away from the sea itself? Bite marks. Bite marks that were the spitting image of those sharks leave. The crew of the abandoned vessel — those that they could find — were torn and bitten apart. Most of the bodies were missing. Whatever the hell they were carrying had been utterly destroyed. Sounds like something we would do, doesn't it? I'd say that the old stories were true in this case, wouldn't you, lass? The Rokea are the Garou of the sea.

Geraint reacts: Really? That's quite frightening. I'd never thought of the Wyrm being in the sea. There's a lot of it to protect. Maybe we should get involved.

Rab registers disgust: As if we didn't have enough problems of our own. Pah. Mind you, if they could help out with those refineries in the North Sea, then we might have more of a fighting chance here.

The Fae

Well, lass, one thing Rab probably didn't tell you is that I'm with the Tuatha — that's why I know so much about the other things out there in the night. I hear tell that you want to know about the fae in particular. I have one piece of advice for you: keep away. If you don't like that advice, and I can see it in you eye that you don't, listen well to what I have to say.

You wouldn't know it from the way some Fianna talk today, but we've always been close to the fae. There's a certain amount of overlap between our Kin, and we've lived alongside each other long enough that some of us claim we share faerie blood. I don't know if that's true or not and I'm not sure that it matters any more.

The fae are not what they once were. First, they can't exist on their own any more. They need a human body to live in. The problem is that the body seems to shape what they are, and may of them seem more human than fae now. Sometimes spending time with them is like seeing some horrible parody of our own lives. They laugh and dance and sing, but it seems to me that their own Apocalypse is closer than the battle we'll be fighting.

Roughly, they're divided into two groups: the seelie and the unseelie. It's not as simple as "good" and "bad", but more like light and dark, maybe even selfless and selfish — though even that might be a stretch. Call 'em apologetically and unapologetically dangerous. Now, our legends say that they used to rule half the year each, and

cooperate with each other. It seems to us that they've lost that unity, and are now more prone to in-fighting than we are. Oh, and there's more than one type, too. Trolls, sidhe and a few others. The sidhe are the leaders, near as we can tell, and the rest are the workforce.

They're still up to their old tricks, too. Many of them will happily cast a glamour over one of us, and lead them into the fae world. There aren't enough Garou left in the world that we can afford to lose too many of us to the fae's struggles. Those of us that do come back, well, the old tales of doomed romances and flighty lovers seem all too true. I've seen many a fae-struck Fiann sink so deep into Harano as a result of their time amongst the Good Folk that death was a release to them.

They're unpredictable, too. One day they'll be swearing undying oaths of kinship and loyalty with us. The next, they won't recognize us and will deny any knowledge of Garou, fae or anything but the human world. So, why do we keep mixing with them? Well, we really thought the old alliances would hold. For a while there, they were very interested in the fomori, thinking they were something to do with their ancient enemies, and ours, the Fomorians returned. Then, all of a sudden, they decide that that's not the case and withdraw. Like I said, unpredictable.

It feels to me like they're enjoying one last party before the end of the world comes. Once upon a time, we really believed that our fae cousins would walk onto the Plain of the Apocalypse with us. I don't think that will happen now, and that's a real damn shame.

The Others

The real irony of it is that while our allies seem to be collapsing in on themselves and dying, our enemies are prospering, and I don't just mean the forces of the Wyrm.

Vampires

No sex, no drink, no food but blood? What the hell do they do all night? Who cares? They're abominations against Gaia. They stand against everything that's dear to us. More than that, they're incapable of enjoying the things that make live worth living. If you needed a certain sign that they're of the Wyrm, it's that. You want my advice, you should kill them at the first opportunity, it's a blessed mercy for whatever they used to be.

Rab grins: Moira, sometimes yer a lassie after me own heart. Just remember that these bastards are tough and fast. Don't underestimate them.

Mages

We're a hospitable bunch, on the whole and sometimes we let fae we trust within the bawn of our caerns, but we'll never, never let a wizard knowingly near one. They're self-centered wee bastards, obsessed with their own view of the world, and they see the

Mother's bounty as something they can just reap whenever they see fit. They abuse hospitality, or so the tales tell, and they don't respect the Mother of us all. That should tell you all you need to know.

Certainly we had links with the old mortal Druids centuries ago, but if there any of them left they're so well hidden that they might as well be dead. Certainly our Theurges will have nothing to do with these New Agers and Wiccans who claim to remember the old ways. Hah. We know better than that. The rites we shared with the Druids have nothing to do with these pale imitations invented a century ago.

Oh, yeah, and some of the surviving wizards seem to serve the Wyrm. Like I said, never to be trusted.

Wraiths

Och, well, we never had much to do with them. If you can't see that your time has been and gone, then you deserve everything you get. We love our lives, but we know that if yer time has come, you face whatever Gaia has lined up for you next with good heart. I hear tell that some of these miserable bastards have started crawling out of their graves again. I say you put them back in there again and again until they learn their lesson and let go.

Hunters

If you want a sure sign that the End is close, it's that the fires of Inquisition seem to be burning once more. In the last few years, more than one pack has been attacked by humans who seem to be resistant to the Delirium. Certainly none of them has been recognized as Kin, and they don't usually smell of the Wyrm. Some of them even seem to wield gifts as potent as our own.

The thing that troubles me a little is that they only ever seem to turn up when we attack humans that have been tainted by the Wyrm, or when we're mingling unseen amongst human society. Given our relationship with our Kin, it's no surprise that we've had more dealings with them than most. A few of them have even approached us and tried to talk. They were killed for the good of the Veil, of course, but it still troubles me that they seem to be little more than normal humans with a few gifts of their own.

Rab winds the discussion up: Moira, lass, stop scaring them wi' tales of the narsty monster hunters. Och, they're there all right. I know of one or two who operate near here. But keep out of their way and play nice among the humans and they don't seem to be much of a problem. There have always been monster hunters. There will always be monster hunters, until the Apocalypse comes. We'll deal with them, like we always have.

Now, if yer all done flapping your gobs, we need to set out for the caern, if we're to join the others. There's glory to be won this evening, isn't there?

Aftermath

In the gray light of the half-hearted dawn, Nada heard laughter and tears mixed together. Someone — she couldn't see who, and didn't really care — handed her a bottle. The quick burning sensation in her throat and stomach provided brief comfort before her metabolism dealt with it. She passed the bottle on reluctantly.

She had no idea if Rab was still alive. Last she'd seen of him he was throwing himself at three Howl... Black Spirals, singing a song of joy and battle as he went. Then she'd been blindsided and had lost track of him in the ensuing fight. The struggle had been remarkable. For drunks and lechers, the Fianna had fought with a desperate ferocity that she had never expected. She truly hoped the rest of them had made it.

As she watched the survivors making their way down the hill, supporting each other. Laughter rising over the cries of the wounded — and dying — she wondered if she really wanted to go to the Balkans after all. The one thing she did know was that she was alive, and this night she would join them in celebrating that fact.

"Will you tell me how to find my way across the moor to Shielness?" he asked.

"You cannot find it tonight," she answered, in a sweet tone, and with a smile that bewitched him, revealing the whitest of teeth.

— George MacDonald, "The Grey Wolf"

In the thousands of years of their history, the Fianna have become quite distinctive from their other Garou brothers. Living among bog, highland, and deep forest, touched by fae blood and magics, they developed unique traditions and Gifts unknown to other tribes. Tribes who see the Fianna as mere drunkards and wild songsters do them a great disservice — and underestimate them to their own cost.

Commonalities: Flavor of the Fianna

Tribes are more than blood kinship; they are cultures, linked by tradition, history, and beliefs. What follows are several characteristics that typify a Fiann, and players can add some of these touches to their characters to make them a little more distinctive. That's not to say that packmates will make fun of a Fiann with no tattoos who refuses to take the heads of their foes back to the caern; just that in general, Fianna address most of these cultural tendencies to some extent, even (in some instances) by deliberately rejecting them.

Numbers

All Garou recognize the cultural and supernatural power and significance of numbers, and that the greatest of numbers is three. Some rites require three days of preparation, for example. The Goddess is represented in three forms (maiden, mother, crone), and several totems likewise are triple-aspected. There are even three fundamental forces — Wyld, Weaver, and Wyrm — warring in the Tellurian. But the Fianna are almost obsessive in their attention to the number. Lore is arranged in groups of threes (e.g., "The Three Greatest Virtues" or "The Three Things that Constitute a King") known as triads. Septs consider packs whose membership is three or nine (three times three) auspicious. Travelers may ask for three days of hospitality at a caern. A Fianna who sees three (or some multiple of three) of anything will take notice; two or four ravens in the tree may be ignored, but three could be taken as a sign. Other significant numbers include five, nine (three times three, a particularly powerful number), seventeen, thirty-three and eighty-one (nine times nine), but none are as pervasive as the simple three.

Virtues

The Three Virtues are Hospitality, Generosity and Bravery. The last is common enough among werewolves, but the first two are held with particular pride by the Fianna. Sharing a fire or a set of strong walls may mean the difference of life or death, but even if it isn't, showing hospitality garners status for the giver. Honoring the guest by giving more than the bare necessities also reflects well on the one who has that luxury. Even poor Fianna will often "put on airs" for visitors, feeding them more than they can afford and putting the guests in the best quarters (or at least the corner of the caern that's out of the wind). Guests are expected to give in return, usually in the form of stories or occasionally gifts (although it's considered quite rude to make any direct connection between hospitality and the gift; it should seem like the gift would have come anyway). The rules of hospitality can be quite complicated, but a basic understanding is usually all that's required.

Adornment

A Fiann on the bus may look like any other Jane. But away from mundane eyes, tribe members tend to dress rather distinctively, or even flamboyantly. Some wear bright clothes, but many wear very revealing garments to show off their tattoos and jewelry. Glyph or knotwork tattoos denoting status or deeds are common, although ritual scarification and even branding is a trend among the younger members of the tribe. Many Fianna are also fond of jewelry, whether it be earrings, torcs, bracelets or rings. Friendships may be cemented by the exchange of armlets. Even the poorer or less ostentatious tribe members have a tendency to wear natural adornments, such as leather headbands or even braided vine armbands.

Where the Whisky Flows Like Wine

Of all the stereotypes pinned on the Fianna by the other tribes, the most prevalent is their drinking; they're said to consume anything with alcohol and lots of it. As with many stereotypes, this is a gross exaggeration with a seed of truth. Rowdy Fianna often perpetuate the stereotype in drinking contests with other tribes, but quite a few Fianna are not tipplers. Social drinking is common, sure, but many drink "ritually" as it were, taking a ceremonial slug before or after moots or at other special occasions. These sips are usually symbolic of something, whether mead produced at the caern, a whiskey "from the home country" (whichever "home country" that may be) or perhaps a toast in remembrance of the sept's founder. Most Fianna see drink as one of the pleasures of life to be savored, but no more (and often less) important than feasting, dance, sex, or music.

Why the Fianna developed their reputation for drinking isn't completely clear. Perhaps the Fianna can get away with drinking more because the use certain Gifts keeps them from getting too drunk — a drunk werewolf is an even more dangerous creature than a sober one, and nothing spoils a gathering like a spontaneous frenzy. Or perhaps it's a point of pride, since many a Galliard claims the Fianna invented distilling (and often come to blows with the Get of Fenris over who came up with mead). Certainly, Fianna Theurges discovered how to bring out the mystic properties of their brews.

Art and Lore

While the notion that Galliards make up half the tribe is exaggerated, the Fianna have certain standards to uphold. As a rule they respect arts in general and storytelling arts in particular, for that is how their lore, knowledge and history is passed along. Most Fianna are expected to be able to tell a tale passably, and packs are often in competition to gather (or invent) the best stories. Gatherings at the gibbous moon are common in Fianna septs, as Moon Dancers teach and entertain through songs and the old tales. Some Fianna learn rare or dying arts such as brewing, boatmaking or weaving in order to preserve them for future generations; the preservation of lore is always an honorable goal.

Trophies of War

But don't believe a love of life and knowledge detracts from a Garou's first priority as defender of Gaia. For the Fianna, the passion of love and music switches easily to the savage joy of tearing flesh with nothing lost in translation.

Fianna are inveterate trophy-takers. After defeating a worthy foe (or a number of lesser foes), many a Fiann picks up something of the fallen such as a patch or a weapon. One of the more grisly trophies Fianna seek is the enemy's severed head. In ancient times, the head was considered the seat of a warrior's power, and the tradition of headhunting continues to this day. Some preserve their trophies in oil, while others fix them on poles or in niches in stones or walls around the caern. Elders sometimes frown upon the practice, preferring to retrieve items rather than members, since a body missing a weapon is much less noteworthy to press and police than a body missing a head. Still, the more boisterous Ahroun, especially those packs who follow the Morrigu and other war totems, have made headhunting a sport in itself.

A King Without Blemish

The Garou respect battle scars; they're the ultimate justification of the title of "Gaia's Warriors." But Fianna also believe that the strongest and best must be

Celtic Tongues

Many Fianna pride themselves on conversational ability with at least one of the Celtic tongues. Many Galliards know several. Such knowledge is useful in comprehending old tales. In a pinch these fairly rare languages can be used as a code; a Black Spiral or fomor may understand the Garou tongue as well as English, but will probably be at a loss when a pack leader gives his commands in Cornish.

There are two surviving branches of the Celtic tongues, known as Goidelic or "q-Celtic" (Irish Gaelic, Scottish Gaelic, Manx) and Brythonic or "p-Celtic" (Welsh, Cornish, Breton). Each language was further divided into numerous dialects, most of which are extinct. And of course there are older forms of the languages, such as Old Welsh, Middle Breton and so on, that may be difficult or impossible for a speaker of the modern version to translate. Little is known about the continental Celtic languages such as the Gaulish tongue. Successive occupations eradicated them, and now they only survive on the lips of a handful of dedicated Moon Dancers. One reason is that the ancients weren't widely literate, and passed down their lore orally. When they did write anything down it was usually in a foreign alphabet, such as Greek or Roman. The only indigenous system of written language that has survived the passing of time is called Ogham. Found chiefly in Ireland and western Britain, it consists of lines radiating out on either side of a straight edge of a stone monument (although it is thought to have been used on wooden poles and structures as well).

And since we're talking about Celtic languages here, this is as good a place as any to point out that Celt is pronounced *Kelt* when referring to peoples, cultures, languages, etc. and *Selt* when referencing certain stone axe heads and sports teams.

the leaders. Though not mandated, it's not uncommon for a righ with a permanent impairment to step down. Said righ will almost always be given a place of high honor in the sept, with some appropriate title ("Warlord," "Master of the Law", and so on) and serving as Beta in all but name. But a cliath amputee should resign himself that while he may go far in the tribe, it's unlikely he'll ever be righ. Of course, his chances are far, far greater than any metis in the tribe. To be blunt, a metis is seldom considered for important positions in a sept, and would never be allowed to lead as righ. Deep down, most Fianna believe the flaws of a metis body correspond with flaws of the spirit.

Backgrounds

Although Fianna suffer no Background restrictions, there are a few trends that arise among the tribe. Here are a few suggestions when choosing Backgrounds for a Fianna character, either to exploit or to contradict.

Allies and Contacts

A gregarious people, Fianna usually have friends and friends of friends, and connections ranging all over the place, including police departments, political circles, smuggling rings, social and environmental activists, bartenders... the list is almost infinite. Fianna Allies are often well-placed Kinfolk, or for some particularly charismatic and amorous young werewolves, off-and-again lovers.

Ancestors

Because they (arguably) know tribal history better than anyone, Fianna have a closer relationship to the spirits of those who went before. The average Fiann can recite his lineage for several generations, and some make a point of meeting the more prominent ancestor-spirits at least once. This is a very appropriate Background for Fianna characters; those with an innate ability to channel their ancestors are highly valued.

Fetish

As noted elsewhere, Fianna hold fetishes in special reverence. For this reason, it is rare for a lowly Cliath to own a fetish more powerful than a talen or two. An elder or sept may even withhold a family heirloom until the young Garou is deemed worthy to bear it.

Kinfolk

A Fiann without Kinfolk is pitied by his peers. Family is crucial to the tribe, the source of support, joy and solace in the war against the Wyrm. Most Fianna will have at least a dot or two in this Background; even metis can count on *some* support from their mortal relatives.

Mentor

Most Fianna feel obligated to teach cubs a thing or two about the tribe and the lore of the Garou; no self-respecting Fianna sept allows youngsters to gain rank without a firm grounding in the ways of the tribe. Instruction is thus often a sept affair, with most higher-ranking Fianna contributing to the education of the cubs to some extent. Still, it isn't uncommon for an elder to take a special interest in a young Fiann, guiding her along her path.

Pure Breed

Fianna respect the blood of heroes as much as any Garou, and their knowledge of heroic lineages rivals that of the Silver Fangs. That doesn't mean they are control

freaks like the Fangs. In a tribe as large and spread out as the Fianna, Pure Breed will be diluted. Pure Breed is no more or less common than in most other tribes.

Resources

Money? Money's only value is in the collection of *truly* valuable things, says the Fiann. The typical Fianna (if such a creature exists) doesn't keep a large bank account. Wealth is usually tied up in land holdings, so that a "rich" Fianna may own large tracts that he struggles to pay taxes for. Spare cash often goes to help out Kinfolk in need, to give gifts, and to throw parties. A taste for jewelry, fine drink, great music and plenty of food will empty a purse in no time, but to the Fianna spending money is much more worthwhile (not to mention fun) than hoarding it.

Rites

While Fianna usually have one or two minor rituals under their belt by their Rite of Passage, they are usually too busy learning history and tales to spend much time picking up rites. That said, it is neither uncommon nor difficult for a young warrior to learn the Rite of Boasting or a druid to acquire the Rite of Talisman Dedication.

Totem

Generosity is a virtue for Stag's children, and in a mixed pack the Fiann is likely to be the most giving in terms of devotion, Gnosis and Background points to the pack totem. That said, it is no more or less common for a Fiann to be in a pack with a totem benefactor.

Abilities

Wrestling (Talent)

Hogan lay gasping on the grass. The fall had knocked the wind clean out of him. "I take it you've done this sort of thing before, then," he finally managed to gasp out.

"Well, I don't like to brag," replied Rory, "but my uncle taught me the old 'collar-and-elbow' before I Changed. He said if I didn't learn a gentleman's style of fighting, I'd probably kill somebody the first time I laid hands 'em." He held his hand out to his prone opponent. "But since you're new to the sept, I've give you another chance to show me yer stuff. Two out o' three, then?"

Wrestling is a general category for grappling martial arts, often used as a (generally) non-lethal means of demonstrating physical prowess. Strength and mass are important, but speed and technique can win the day against a heavier opponent. Nearly every culture has some form of wrestling, from Greece's pankration to Japan's Sumo, and many have several. Scrappers that they are, the Celtic nations developed nearly a dozen varieties. Some styles are highly ritualized, while others are "catch-as-catch-can." Note that "professional wrestling" isn't exactly covered by this Talent, but rather is a combination of Wrestling, Athletics and Performance.

- • Novice: You didn't always get the worst of it in a playground scrap.
- •• Practiced: You can tell which popular pro wrestlers have real experience and which are just glorified acrobats.
- ••• Competent: Your skill has moved well beyond raw talent.
- •••• Expert: Other wrestlers watch your matches for pointers.
- ••••• Master: You are a legend in the arena.

Possessed by: Brawlers, athletes, professional wrestlers, streetwise scrappers.

Specialties: Greco-Roman, Collar-and-Elbow, Carachd Uibhist, throws, pins.

Faerie Lore (Knowledge)

"Johnny, you mean to tell me you sold that fine spear?"

"For a fine bag of full of gold coins, no less. Those folks from River Fork saw it at the Games and just had to have it. Just look at this..." Johnny pulled out the velvet pouch and upended it. Dry leaves poured out, scattering in the November wind.

Brian smiled. "Don't look so surprised, lad. The River Fork Folk are among the Fair Folk. You've been taken but good, but count yourself lucky — they could have tried to buy your firstborn! Hah hah hah... heh... uh, little Jeremy didn't come up in the conversation, did he?"

The fae figure significantly in the legends and lore of the Fianna. Not every Fiann has ever met a changeling or bargained with a water sprite, but as a tribe they know more about these wondrous creatures than any other tribe. Faerie Lore represents a general knowledge of the laws of Faerie, and how to recognize various fae magics, spirits and creatures. This isn't an in-depth knowledge possessed by changelings and other fae, but an outsider's version gained from old tales, sages, and hard experience. Still, the fae realms are subtle and treacherous, and knowing the etiquette of the labyrinthine and perverse faerie laws may mean the difference between an outstanding Gift and a hundred years spent as an ash tree in a meadow of the Arcadia Gateway.

Note that possession of this Knowledge does *not* entitle you to act as if your character has read **Changeling: The Dreaming**. Your Storyteller is not bound to make the fae correspond to the information found in that game, and at any rate, much of what's in that book is inaccessible even to the wisest Garou. This Lore covers social niceties and a general knowledge of how certain types of fae act in various situations, not an in-

depth knowledge of their specific powers and weaknesses. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of what lore is accessible to you even with five dots in this Knowledge — not the **Changeling** rulebook.

- • Novice: You've heard tales by the fireside.
- •• Practiced: You know a bit about the Good People.
- ••• Competent: You know what not to eat in an Unseelie Hall.
- •••• Expert: You can make a good bargain without losing your firstborn.
- ••••• Master: If Tam Lin knew as much as you, the queen wouldn't have caught him in the first place.

Possessed by: Tuatha de Fionn, Theurges

Specialties: Faerie Manners, Faerie Glamours, Changelings, Riddles, Arcadia Gateway, Seelie Court, Unseelie Court

Gifts

New Auspice Gifts

These Gifts are, of course, Fianna Gifts first and foremost, and can be bought by Fianna of any auspice as tribe Gifts. However, Storytellers may find them appropriate for general use by other Garou of the relevant auspice. Thus, Fog of War can be treated as a Level Four Ragabash Gift, a Level Four Galliard Gift, *and* a Level Four Fianna Gift, if the Storyteller is willing.

Ragabash

• **Fog of War (Level Four)** — No mattered how disciplined the army and ordered the plan, a battlefield is chaos. Smoke, noise, hidden enemies and fear can all lead to disorganization. Even in the modern age, mistaken identity leads to "friendly fire" casualties. This Gift exacerbates this problem to often devastating effect. A commander might not see advancing foes, or see foes that aren't there; a team may fire upon allies, or mistake a command to "advance" for a call to "retreat." This Gift is taught by a raven- or other trickster-spirit.

System: The Garou sings, howls or plays an eerie song (bagpipes are popular), spends a Gnosis point and rolls Manipulation + Performance (difficulty 8). If successful, foes in hearing range must make a standard Perception roll every turn to be fully aware of what's happening around them. They lose one success on this roll for every success rolled by the player; if the end result is negative successes, it counts as a botch. Zero successes on perception indicates confusion, while on a botch the character critically misinterprets what she sees. The Gift lasts as long as the song or howl continues, but the singer must concentrate on the song (and thus cannot engage in combat or other strenuous activity).

MET: The Garou performs her song, spends a Gnosis Trait and makes a Social Challenge (retest with *Performance*). With success, all foes in hearing range must make a Mental Challenge at the beginning of every turn (at Storyteller discretion, this may be performed as a mob challenge for ease in marshalling). On a win, the foe is unaffected; on a tie, the foe suffers a three-Trait penalty on any perception or visually related challenge; on a loss, the foe loses on all ties during the turn due to the increased difficulty of sight.

Gallard

• **Reverie (Level Two)** —This Gift makes the victim's mind wander down memory lane. While it may occasionally dredge up useful remembrances, it mainly serves to makes someone less observant or less focused on the task at hand. An ancestor-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: Roll Manipulation + Enigmas (difficulty of the victim's Willpower). For every success, the difficulty of the victim's rolls related to Mental Attributes increases by one, to a maximum of 9 (representing stronger, more vivid memories). The effect lasts one minute per success or until the target's attention is diverted. (For example, a guard under five minutes' worth of Reverie probably won't notice the Ragabash sneaking over the wall — but if he does, or if the Garou attacks him, the Gift's effects end). The Fiann can't directly control what fills the victim's mind, but may be able to influence the subject ("Yeah, Gorm, remember that party at the Standing Stone? And the dancing girl, wasn't she something...").

MET: Make a Static Social Challenge against the target's Willpower (retest with *Enigmas*). With success, the target drifts off into daydreaming and suffers a two-Trait penalty on Mental Challenges. Something that would shake him out of his woolgathering — an attack, a loud noise, being shaken — will end the Gift's effect. If the target isn't awakened first, the Gift lasts for five minutes.

• **Fog of War (Level Four)** — As the Ragabash Gift.

New Fianna Gifts

• **Faerie Light (Level One)** — This Gift is a favorite of tricksters, who can create a wisp of faint ghostly (usually white, blue or green) light. The light can be directed by the Fianna, but is too faint to illuminate more than three feet. Because it can be seen farther, it's useful for signaling at night, not to mention distracting or misleading others — a fact not lost on pranksters. This Gift is taught by marsh- and faerie-spirits.

System: The Garou rolls Wits + Enigmas (difficulty 6). The light appears anywhere within the Garou's line of sight. It may float along at up to 10 yards per turn. The light lasts for one turn per success, but will last an entire scene at the cost of a Gnosis point.

MET: Make a Mental Challenge (retest with *Enigmas*). With success, the light appears and lasts for two turns. Spend a Gnosis Trait to make it last for one scene.

• **Salmon Leap (Level One)** — The old legends relate of Fianna warriors leaping over enemies and crossing rivers without getting their feet wet; this Gift is one way they did it. Taught by a salmon-spirit or ancestor-spirit, this Gift is functionally identical to the Lupus Gift: Hare's Leap.

MET: As the Lupus Gift: *Hare's Leap.*

• **Howl of the Unseen (Level Two)** — Just as the ancient peoples had power in the connections between two halves (day/night, light half/dark half, etc), so do the Fianna draw on their connection of spirit world and physical realm to bridge the Gauntlet. This Gift allows a howl from one side of the Gauntlet to echo across to the other. It is taught by a Bean Si, as well as by the spirits of animals that make loud noise without being seen, such as frogs or insects.

System: The Garou rolls Gnosis, difficulty of the Gauntlet, after which she may howl or speak for up to a full turn; the sound will be clearly audible on both sides of the Gauntlet. The Storyteller is free to determine how much can be said in the span of one turn.

MET: The Garou makes a Static Gnosis Challenge against the Gauntlet (retest with *Occult*). With success, she can howl or speak for up to one full turn, and be clearly heard on both sides.

• **Fair Fortune (Level Two)** — A Fiann with this Gift has a streak of luck a mile wide. She's dealt a great hand, her prey is extra-clumsy today, or the wind shifts just in time to scent an ambush. A faerie or fortune-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: With the expenditure of one Gnosis point, the player may reroll any failed or botched roll. The decision must be made immediately after the failed or botched roll. This Gift is only usable once per scene.

MET: By expending a Gnosis Trait, the player gains a retest of a lost challenge. Use of the Gift must immediately follow the lost challenge. The second result stands. The Gift may only be used once per scene, and no more than twice per session.

• **Spear Dancing (Level Two)** — The old tales tell of Fianna throwing spears while balanced on the beam of a chariot at full gallop, or even crossing an army by leaping from spearpoint to spearpoint. This Gift gives the Fianna the ability to balance on the smallest surfaces, whether tightrope, post or even a spearpoint. If successful, the Garou takes no damage from stepping or handstanding on sharp objects, but

may otherwise be wounded normally. A bird-spirit or an ancestor-spirit may teach this Gift.

System: The player spends a Gnosis point and rolls Dexterity + Athletics (difficulty varies: 5 to stand on the back of a trotting horse, 6 to stay aloft a rolling ball, 8 to jog across a tightrope, and 9 to balance on the point of a spear). Storytellers may require additional successes for more difficult feats (for example, the horse breaks into a gallop, or the tightrope is in a high wind). The effects last for a scene.

MET: Spend a Gnosis Trait and make a Static Physical Challenge (retest with *Athletics*), with the difficulty based on the feat attempted. The Storyteller may require additional tests if the feat gets more challenging. The Gift lasts for one scene or combat.

• **Fire in the Belly (Level Two)** — Anger and inner turmoil does wonders for creativity. Some Fianna use this principle in new and potentially dangerous ways, directing some of their inner Rage to fuel their creative urges. While the work is more intense, it is also colored by the Rage, reflecting the redirected fury of the Fiann's soul. "Sublime" and "peaceful" are not words associated with works produced using this Gift. On the other hand, forged weapons take on the new resonance quite readily, attracting War and Rage spirits (-1 difficulty for Rite of the Fetish). Brigid herself teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a point of Rage and makes a Willpower roll (difficulty 7). A successful roll adds an automatic success to an appropriate Craft, Expression or Performance roll. A botch will require an immediate Rage roll for frenzy. Only one roll per project is possible. Using this Gift more than once a month is taxing and dangerous; each additional use during a span of a month increases the difficulty by one.

MET: Spend a Rage Trait and make a Willpower Challenge. With success, the Garou gains one retest for a *Crafts*, *Expression* or *Performance* test. Losing the challenge requires a test for frenzy. This Gift may be only used once per month, and once per project.

• **Pin The Eagle's Wing (Level Three)** — Known as Lleu's Spear by the Welsh Fianna (who claim to have discovered it), a Fianna with this Gift can throw a spear as far as an arrow and sink it deep into its target. Spirited Fianna can even pierce heavy doors or strike a foe on a high rooftop — or pierce a Leech's putrid heart. Ancestor-spirits teach this Gift.

System: The Fianna must concentrate on the weapon for one full turn and make a Willpower roll (difficulty 8). She then spends a variable number of Gnosis points. Each Gnosis grants two additional dice, which can be split between the attack roll and damage roll. Dice may also be used to increase the spear's flight distance (20 yards per die allocated). The Gift doesn't work with any other weapon, even a thrust spear — only a thrown spear.

MET: The Fianna spends a turn in concentration and makes a Willpower challenge. With success, the Fianna may spend up to four Gnosis Traits to put to *one* of the following options: increasing the spear's flight for 20 yards (or feet for a small game site); as bonus Traits for the challenge to hurl the spear; or applied as wounds. This Gift only works with a thrown spear.

• **Forms of Cernunnos (Level Five)** — Celtic legends abound with heroes transforming into animals, whether to escape, to hunt, or to spy. Cernunnos the Horned God was the master of animals; with this Gift the Garou is able to master the form of any animal. A Wyld spirit or a faerie spirit teaches this Gift.

System: As per the Ragabash Gift: The Thousand Forms, with the limitation that mythical beasts are not possible forms, but with the addition that another *willing* person can be changed at the cost of two Gnosis and +1 difficulty. Said person cannot change back without the assistance of someone who knows this Gift.

MET: As per the Ragabash Gift: *The Thousand Forms*. Mythical creatures are not options for this version of the Gift. The Fianna can change another willing participant for two Gnosis Traits and an additional Trait to the difficulty. The second participant requires the assistance of someone who knows the Gift to change back. Someone who knows *The Thousand Forms* may be able to assist for an additional Trait of difficulty.

• **Havgan's Healing (Level Five)** — Named after the foe Pwyll dueled with in the Otherworld, this powerful Gift lets wounds alternately harm and heal the Garou, giving the Fianna a critical edge in a sustained battle. A death-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: To activate this Gift, the Fianna must spend two Gnosis points and concentrate for one turn. For the duration of the scene, any health levels that are not soaked alternately harm or heal the Garou. The first blow to strike the Garou injures him as normal; with the second blow, any damage that is not soaked (and the player must roll soak as normal) instead is treated as healing. Bashing wounds heal bashing damage, lethal wounds can heal bashing or lethal damage, and aggravated wounds heal all forms of damage. The third blow injures, the fourth heals, and so on. Wounds suffered from silver can never heal, however; they inflict damage as normal, and "use up" that blow — for instance, a Fianna wounded by silver by the fourth blow after activating this Gift takes unsoakable aggravated damage as normal, and the fifth blow will injure, not heal. (However, any aggravated damage taken on the sixth blow and every other attack after that could

heal the silver damage.) Any wounds left unhealed by the end of the scene must be healed as usual.

MET: The Fianna spends two Gnosis and concentrates for a turn. For the rest of the scene or combat, any wounds the Garou receives either heal or harm him — the first strike injures, the second heals, the third injures, and so on. The type of damage received determines what can be healed — to heal bashing damage, the Garou must receive a bashing wound; lethal damage may be healed with a lethal wound. Aggravated damage can heal any wound. Further, the damage is healed on a one-for-one basis (two lethal wounds versus one level of lethal "healing" results in one level healed and one remaining). Extra levels of healing damage that are not used simply vanish — they cannot be stored or stacked. Wounds caused by silver cannot heal; they cause normal aggravated damage and also use up the blow — if the blow was meant to heal and it's caused by silver, the wound remains, and the following strike also injures as usual. Aggravated damage not caused by silver suffered afterward on the following strike and every other attack afterward could heal the silver damage. If any wounds remain at the end of the scene, they must be healed as usual.

This can be a monster to track in combat, and the Storyteller is within his rights to disallow it in the name of simplicity.

Rites

Rites of Accord

Rite of Hospitality

Level Two

Hospitality is one of the three great virtues of the ancient Celts, and a similarly honorable virtue to the modern Fianna. Ordinarily, hospitality is a given at a hearth, but occasionally it needs to be formally stated in a binding fashion; perhaps the seeker is a rival, or has bad blood with others at the sept and needs protection. In such circumstances, the rite is performed. The grantor (typically the righ or the owner of the hall or territory) is required to give his guest food, shelter and reasonable comforts for three days, as well as protection from foes (without or within). In return, the supplicant is expected to be the model guest, neither stealing, starting fights nor otherwise bringing trouble to the household. And be sure that even if the offense isn't obvious, the spirits that witnessed the oath will find a way to bring it to everyone's attention.

System: Typically, only the grantor needs to know the ritual. The supplicant formally asks for hospitality, usually reciting lineage and titles in the formal way. The host replies in formal language, granting her protection and a place in her hall. If the rite fails, the delivery seems forced and all present will feel the awkwardness of the moment. If successful, both parties are bound to their bargain. Should either one break the bargain, that party loses Honor Renown (-4 for the host, -2 for guest). Ordinarily, no Renown is gained if both live up to their ends of the bargain, but if there is an element of danger (guest and host are bitter rivals or even enemies, for instance) the righ and guest gain two and one temporary Honor respectively. If the righ is notably miserly, she gains but one point; if outstandingly generous, or required to go to great lengths to defend the guest (sustaining grievous injury, destruction of the hall, loss of honor, or something equally costly), she may gain three. The Storyteller should be careful that this doesn't become a font of "free Renown"; Honor should be awarded only if there's something at stake — for instance, being a polite host to a guest that's insulted you or is a rival, or being a model guest despite constant provocation. After three days (usually measured to sunset, but typically stated during the rite), all bets are off; if the guest is in trouble, he'd better make tracks.

MET: No special system required.

Rites of Death

Rite of the Hero's Sleep

Level Five

This rare and powerful rite has been used on some of the greatest heroes of the Fianna. When a Fianna of greatest renown falls in battle, he is placed in the earth (such as a cave, or a chamber of a burial mound), where the ritemaster dedicates the body to the land, tying soul and earth together. The body heals, then falls into a deep sleep. On rare occasions, the hero's pack or shieldmate is allowed to join the warrior in sleep. The champion and his pack then lie in state, ageless, without need for food or breath, until he awakens to take up arms once again — at the dawn of the Apocalypse.

System: The ritemaster spends three permanent points of Gnosis when performing the ritual. If she succeeds, the champion's wounds heal in a moment and the flush returns to the hero's cheeks. There is usually time enough for a few final words before sleep overcomes the hero. If the ritemaster gains five or more successes, then the champion may awaken for a short while and return to the caern at any time of great crisis (at the Storyteller's option).

MET: Spend three permanent Gnosis Traits and make the usual challenge.

Rites of Renown

Rite of Boasting

Level One

Boasting and bragging have always been a vital aspect of warrior cultures. Boasts serve to work up a warrior's courage while putting fear into the opponent. But to truly impress, the boaster must back up his claims. This rite is more than formalized bragging, for it forces the Garou to "put up or shut up." Before a battle or mission, the Garou boasts before all assembled that he will perform a particularly impressive feat (for example, "I will kill three Black Spirals with only my claws," "I will scale the electrified razorwire of the refinery" or "I will be first to reach the shield wall, there to wrest the enemy's standard from his dead hand."). The boast is performed in a ritual fashion, with a short recitation of lineage and a summary of glorious deeds performed to date. If he makes good on his boast, he magnifies the Glory of the act. If he fails, the resulting derision of his peers costs him Glory; boasting is only respected if you can back it up. This rite is most commonly used among the Fianna, Get of Fenris and Wendigo, but most tribes have some version of it.

System: For every two successes on a Charisma + Rituals roll (difficulty varies according to the feat proposed, with more difficult and glorious feats lowering the difficulty; the number should probably range from 4 to 8), the boast earns a potential extra temporary Glory, up to the amount of Glory the feat would ordinarily garner. If the rite is performed properly and the Garou successfully achieves his goal, he gains the Glory bonus. If he fails and lives, he loses that amount. If he dies while carrying out his deed, there is neither loss nor gain of extra Renown.

A single pack may boast of a deed, but only the pack leader can perform the rite. In this case, difficulty is increased by one, and the entire pack gains or loses the Glory award.

MET: The Garou makes his boast, following it with a Social Challenge. If the rite was performed properly, the Garou makes good on his boast *and* he succeeded in his challenge, he gains two bonus temporary Glory. For a pack, the pack leader must perform the rite, and the challenge is a Static Social Challenge, with difficulty based on the either the deed or the pack's number.

Mystic Rites

Feast for the Spirits

Level Two

Since the dawn of religion, worshippers have made offerings of food to gods and spirits. The Fianna do so to honor ancestors at feasts, reminding them of their former lives and strengthening their ties to kith and kin. Theurges also enact the rite as chiminage to spirits who want a taste (literally) of what the living enjoy.

System: The ritemaster sings or plays a tune of welcome for the spirits while investing Gnosis in the food (one point is good for a plate of food and a drink), and rolls Wits + Rituals (difficulty of the local Gauntlet). Only one success is required to make the essence of the food as tangible to spirits in the Penumbra as it is to the Garou in the physical realm. Once its essence has been consumed, the physical food and drink loses any appealing taste or texture as well as much of its nutritional value.

MET: One Trait of Gnosis will invest a plate of food and a single goblet of drink, or a pitcher of drink. A challenge against the local Gauntlet rating follows. With success, the food becomes tangible in the Penumbra.

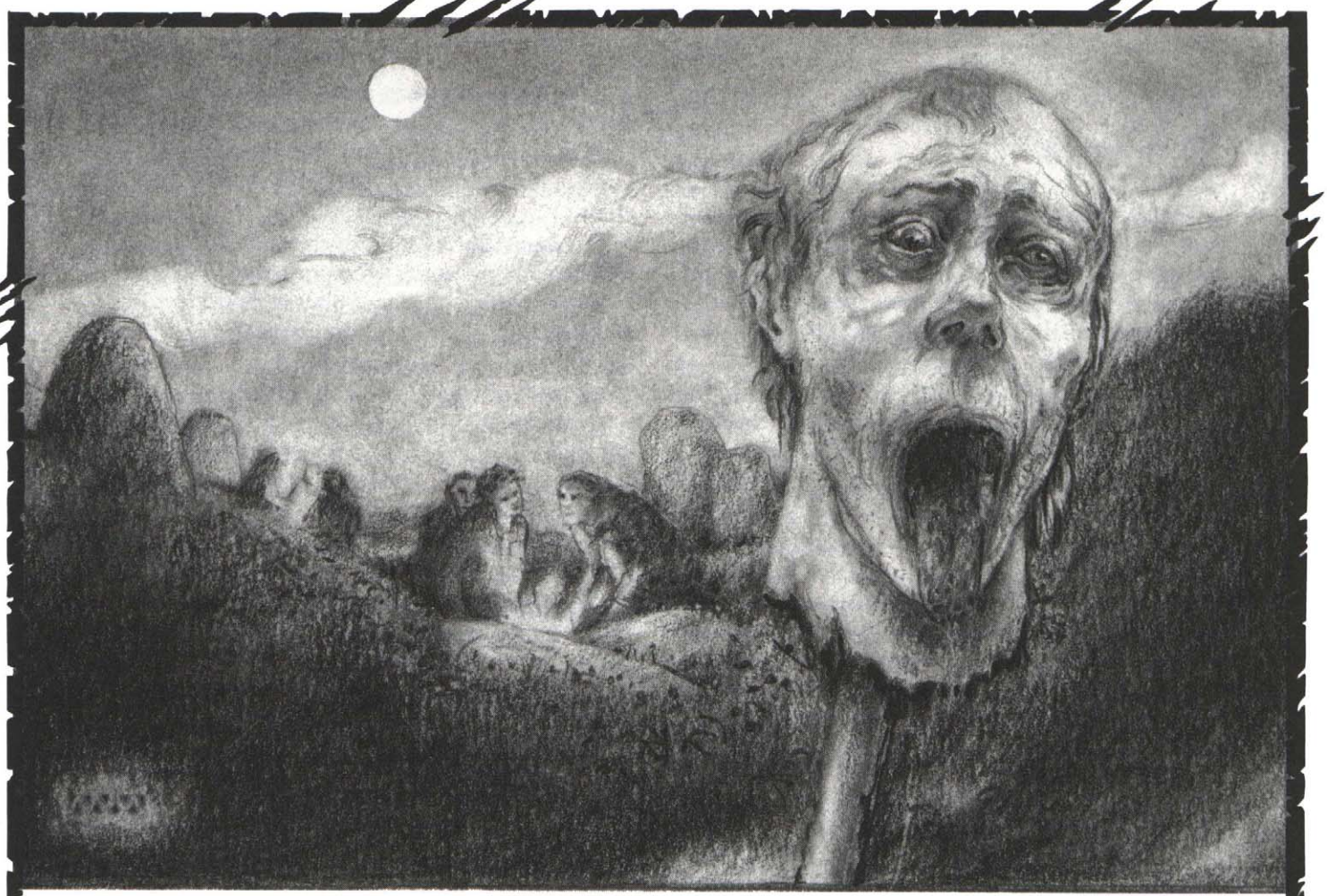
Rite of the Foeman's Vigil

Level Three

Severed heads can be more than a trophy, they can be a ward. In this modified version of the Rite of the Fetish, the ritemaster takes the head of a newly taken foe (within the last 24 hours) and rebinds the spirit within it in service to the Garou. When put in place (usually buried under a pile of stones or placed on a pike or wall), the head emits a shrill, undulating wail if any unwelcome visitor approaches within 20 yards of the head. It will cease to function if moved or broken, if it is activated too many times, or until the third Samhain after its creation; then the spirit flees.

A rarely used variant of this rite (known as Hero's Vigil) uses the head of a recently killed Fianna hero (should the spirit be agreeable to the binding).

System: The ritemaster rolls Wits + Rituals (difficulty 10, 9 if the slayer conducts the rite). At the end of the rite the head is placed in its permanent position. It will activate a number of times equal to successes rolled. Normal intruders will automatically be detected if they enter the alert radius; those with supernatural concealment (such as Obfuscate, human magic or a Gift) may evade notice if the being rolls more successes for their respective concealment power than the ritemaster. This does not detect intrusion across the Gauntlet, but a Black Spiral Dancer head (for example) could be placed in the Penumbra with similar effects. If Rite of Hero's Vigil is enacted on a willing Fianna's spirit, difficulty is 10 - Rank of the dead Garou, and the head may be good for up to nine Samhains. As the two rites are very



similar, Garou who know one only require three days of study to learn the other.

MET: The ritemaster makes a Static Mental Challenge (difficulty based on the number of times the ritemaster wishes the head to activate). The head automatically reacts to normal creatures. Supernaturally hidden intruders (using the *Obfuscate* Discipline, Gifts or Sphere magic) must make a Mental Challenge against the ritemaster (or compare the ritemaster's Rank against the level of power in question). The head must be placed in either the Penumbra or the Realm, and cannot sense intruders on the other side of the Gauntlet. For *Rite of the Hero's Vigil*, the challenge is a Static Mental with a difficulty of 10 – the dead Garou's rank. The second version allows the head to be active for a year (Samhain to Samhain).

Seasonal Rites

On the Quarter Days of the year (solstices and equinoxes) the Fianna typically perform the appropriate rites (listed on pp. 165-166 of the main rulebook). In addition, they celebrate distinct rituals on the Cross Quarter days (days which fall halfway between the Quarter Days). Each of the Level Two Fianna Seasonal Rites (Samhain, Imbolc, Beltane, and Lughnassa, described below) must be learned separately. To the ancient Fianna, a new day began at sunset, which is why these festivals last from evening to evening rather than from midnight to midnight.

• **Samhain (Oct 31-Nov 1):** The Fianna calendar year begins on this night. An uncharacteristically subdued celebration with a grand feast, music, and drink, the Samhain Rite is a time for reflecting on the year just passed. Tributes are given to honor the year's fallen, whose spirits are often in attendance; for these honored fallen the sept saves places at the table and choice seats in the bardic circles; Theurges frequently enact the rite Feast for the Spirits so the dead may revel once more with their comrades. It's believed by some that the dead wait until this night before moving on to their next life, or perhaps their essences become "fully fledged" spirits at this time. Because the Gauntlet is slightly thinner (-1 to the Gauntlet at Storyteller's discretion) on this night than on any other night of the year, it is also a night when all manner of spirits (benign and otherwise) cross over to cause mischief or simply to observe the living world. Those who take part in the Samhain ritual regain Gnosis equal to the ritemaster's successes.

MET: Regain two Traits of lost Gnosis during participation.

• **Imbolc (Feb 1-Feb 2):** Imbolc is a festival of fertility and of hope; though many cold nights may lay

ahead, winter is ebbing before the promise of spring. Ritual bonfires dot the caern, and the night is filled with tales of struggles won and the surety of better times ahead. It is also the sacred festival honoring the goddess Brigid, and deemed a favorable time to ask for the spirits' aid in endeavors of art or craft. Children born of Garou on this day are considered especially lucky, for more often than not their Garou blood runs true. Participants in the Imbolc rite regain Willpower equal to the ritemaster's successes. Furthermore, Fianna that have overcome Harano often claim that taking part in the Imbolc rite was the moment they began to claw their way back.

MET: Regain two Traits of lost Willpower during participation.

• **Beltane (April 30-May 1):** The celebration of the dawning of the light half of the year is as abandoned as that of the dark half (Samhain) is reflective. Just after dark, the ritemaster bids every fire in the caern extinguished; after a few minutes of darkness, a new fire is lit, and its flame distributed to rekindle all the others, symbolizing a fresh start and the return of light. Music, food, dancing and loving are the order of the night. Kinfolk are especially welcomed to the party, not only to share the fun; children conceived during Beltane are reputed to have a greater chance of breeding true. On the downside, the Litany is very fragile on this night as the heat of passion burns away all rationality; elders watch over the cubs, but even the older sept members have occasionally succumbed to temptation.

Beltane is a festival celebrating new vitality. Those who participate in a successful Beltane rite gain an extra dot of Stamina for the next three days. During the festival, Rites of Cleansing and other purification rituals are at -1 difficulty.

MET: Gain the *Robust* Physical Trait for the next three days. Purification rituals gain a single free retest (use during casting — second result must stand).

• **Lughnassa (August 1-2):** In the ancient agrarian communities, this was the celebration of the beginning of harvest. For the Fianna it represents the fruits of labor, and the gathering of strength for the coming winter. Bread made from grain of the year, and fresh-made mead and beer as well, are ceremoniously consumed. Those who participate in a successful Lughnassa rite gain an extra dot of Strength for the next three days. During the festival, rolls involving lore and wisdom are at -1 difficulty, as the Fianna find it easier to remember the fruits of mental labor as well.

MET: Gain the *Stalwart* Physical Trait for the next three days. Mental Challenges relating to *Lore* or wisdom receive a single free retest during the festival (the second result stands).

Minor Rites

Twilight Song

The period between day and night is considered a magical time by the Fianna, a transitory time when the world grows still and the hidden dances almost within vision.

System: The Fiann must howl or play a mournful tune just before sunrise and just after sunset every day for nine days. The Garou then gains an additional die when attempting to cross or see through the Gauntlet. The bonus lasts until the Fiann fails to perform the ritual; she must then perform it for nine more days before regaining the benefits.

MET: The Garou gains an extra Trait for crossing or seeing through the Gauntlet.

Fetishes

Fianna fetishes come in any manner of objects, but tend to be handcrafted and beautiful. Gold brooches, fine harps or flutes, and weapons are common. The prevalence of weapon fetishes corresponds roughly with tribal weapon preference. Spears are popular with Fianna who are particularly proud of the human side of their heritage; axes are seen as more of a "werewolf's weapon," and often contain spirits that grant powers of wisdom and craftsmanship as well as battle prowess. Swords, bows and knives are all secondary, and klaives are notably rare — and very highly prized.

Whatever their preference, Fianna are quite reverential to their fetishes. This goes beyond taking good care of the fetish and keeping the spirit happy (as most Garou do); they are obsessive on learning the details of an item's history, from who made it to who's owned it and what they did with it. Should someone discover a lost fetish, that pack will visit sept after sept, researching the item until its background is discovered. Before bestowing a fetish, the old owner will be sure the new owner knows all there is to know about the heirloom. And the Fianna's interest is not limited to their own fetishes; they discuss their fetishes like people discuss sports, at great length and greater detail. As a result, werewolves of other tribes sometimes come to the Fianna to learn about the lore of their own fetishes!

Goibhniu's Hammer

Level 2, Gnosis 6

Though not a combat fetish, it is highly prized by Fianna smiths; some of the finest weapons, including several klaives, were forged with these hammers. For every two successes on a Gnosis roll, the smith gains +1 die to the metalworking (Craft) roll, In addition, items crafted with the hammer reduce the difficulty for a Rite

of the Fetish by one; such items are more pleasing to spirits. An earth or fire spirit is bound into this fetish.

MET: The Garou makes a Gnosis Challenge invoking the hammer, and gains a single retest when making a *Crafts: Metalworking* challenge.

Pipes of the Otherworld

Level 2, Gnosis 5

This fetish typically appears as a very fine set of black bagpipes (usually of the Highland variety) with an unusually mournful song that pulls at the spirit — literally. When successfully activated, every two successes to a Charisma + Performance (7) roll subtracts one from the difficulty of Mystic Rituals; the difficulty rating for Rituals of Death (such as a Rite for the Departed) is decreased by one for every success.

MET: A successful activation and Social Challenge (retest with Performance) grants a ritemaster two extra Traits for performing Mystic Rituals or Rituals of Death.

Torc of Wisdom

Level 3, Gnosis 5

When activated, the torc increases the wearer's permanent Willpower *or* Gnosis (each torc is dedicated to one or the other; a level four fetish might have the power to increase either one at a time) by one point until the end of the scene. A spirit of wisdom empowers the fetish.

MET: The wearer gains a temporary Willpower Trait or Gnosis Trait that can be spent or used for comparisons on ties. The effect lasts one scene.

Carnyx of Victory

Level 4, Gnosis 7

The Carnyx appears as a tall horn with an animal head at the end. When sounded, it fills the air with a weird, discordant braying that heartens allies and strikes fear into the hearts of the foe. When successfully activated, each success to a Manipulation + Performance roll (difficulty 8) adds one die to the dice pools of all comrades. The effect continues for as long as the Fiann sounds the horn. Requires a war spirit.

MET: With successful activation and a Social Challenge (retest with *Performance*), the horn grants all comrades a "ghost" Trait that can be added to any pool for comparisons on ties.

Spear of Len

Level 4, Gnosis 6

There are only a handful of these weapons known to exist. Named for a legendary smith who made the first of its kind (used by Fionn mac Cumhail himself), it usually appears as a spear with a head of perpetually cold bluish steel. When pressed hard against the forehead, the spear

keeps the warrior from being muddled or lulled by magics, whether vampiric, fae, mage or Garou in nature. This is not a general mental defense effect, but does cover mental illusions and sleep spells. At the Storyteller's discretion, a Willpower roll may be necessary against particularly powerful threats. Naturally, one can't fight with the spear and use its power simultaneously. Creating such a spear requires the spirit of a north wind.

MET: When activated and placed against the forehead, the spear protects the bearer from mind- or perception-altering magics and sleep effects. This does not affect powers that manipulate the emotions or the physical body.

Torc of the Wolf

Level 4, Gnosis 7

This powerful fetish typically appears as a heavy gold torc, made with nine gold braids (each made with nine gold wires), the ends capped by golden wolfheads with bared fangs. When activated, the torc allows its wearer to shift forms instantly without spending Rage for the duration of the scene.

MET: When successfully activated, the wearer can shift forms without spending Rage for one scene.

Boar's Tusk

Level 5, Gnosis 7

This fearsome fetish, a large tusk from a boar suspended by a leather thong, marks the wearer as someone you don't want to mess with. When activated, the fetish adds one health level per success and one Stamina per two successes for one scene.

MET: With activation, the wearer gains two extra Bruised health levels and Robust x 2 for one scene or one combat.

Threefold Axe

Level 5, Gnosis 7

The culmination of Fianna smithing skill is the threefold axe, a weapon crafted to be useful against fae, shapeshifters and undead. Each one is forged of a blend of cold iron, silver and gold — a technique that would be all but impossible without the rites of forging and spiritual assistance. The resulting alloy is spiritually hardened to a steel-like quality. Because the alloy dilutes the purity of each metal, the axe is not treated as purely of any particular metal (thus, the damage it inflicts on werewolves is not truly "silver damage," and therefore not unsoakable). However, the spirits within charge the power of each metal, giving the axe the power of each metal's mystical affinity.

Threefold axes do Strength +3 aggravated damage, and are difficulty 7 to wield. They do two extra dice of damage against vampires, fae or shapeshifters with a vulnerability to silver or gold; this damage can be soaked if the target is capable of soaking aggravated damage.

To properly finish a threefold axe, the smith must bind an earth-spirit, a solar spirit of some sort, and a lunar spirit into the axe. Convincing the three spirits to coexist is almost as difficult a process as forging the axe in the first place, but the triple mystical power of sun, moon and earth is hard to deny.

MET: A threefold axe is treated much like an ordinary axe (**Laws of the Wild**, pg. 196), save that it adds two additional bonus Traits when used against vampires, shapeshifters with a vulnerability to gold or silver, or fae of any sort.

Tattoo Fetishes

Tattoos are common among the Fianna; some have spirits bound into them. These take the form of Celtic designs or Garou glyphs, and must be of quality craftsmanship — a spirit isn't likely to willingly enter a heart with "Mom" written across it, particularly if such a mark was purchased in a parlor. System-wise, tattoo fetishes are treated like ordinary fetishes with one exception: should the player ever botch her activation roll, the spirit is instantly freed; the tattoo flares, leaving an outline on the skin which gradually fades away.

Talens

Tathlum

Level 2, Gnosis 5

A tathlum is a sling-stone made from a specially prepared mixture of sand, lime, herbs and the brain of an enemy, into which a vengeance-spirit is bound. Ordinarily, a sling does Str + 2 bashing damage. A tathlum generally does lethal damage. If the brain ball was created with a specific individual in mind, it does aggravated damage to that individual. The brain of an especially powerful foe (an elder Black Spiral Dancer or ancient vampire, for example) increases the damage by an additional +1.

MET: A tathlum inflicts lethal damage in combat. It inflicts aggravated damage if it is created to target a specific individual (who should be named to a Storyteller). Powerful foes' brains inflict an extra level of damage.

Mist o' the Glen

Gnosis 7

A deep brown brew, this, with a white effervescence swirling along its surface like lake mist. It doesn't flow down the throat so much as swirl, but when it hits bottom it spreads a comfortable numbness through the body. The drinker's mood becomes amiable and reflective. Tense meetings between rivals, when suitably lubricated with this elixir, settle down to jokes, laugh-

ter, and wistful reminiscences. The drinker must make a Willpower roll against the drink's Gnosis rating. Success raises the difficulty to frenzy by two, and puts the imbiber in a more philosophical frame of mind. Those failing the roll lose a temporary Rage point, while botching removes all but one of their temporary Rage points — making the drinker perhaps even more mellow and philosophical than is good for him. This is one of the more common of the potable talens, and can be found at most Fianna caerns.

MET: After imbibing the drink, the drinker makes a Willpower Challenge. Success means a two-Trait bonus during frenzy tests. On a loss, the drinker immediately makes a Simple Test. If he wins the Simple Test, he loses a temporary Rage Trait. If he loses the Simple Test as well, he loses all but one of his temporary Rage — he hasn't lost the wolf, but shifting is out of the question.

And always remember — no alcohol or drugs at a live-action event!

Royal Mead

Gnosis 7

Royal Mead, or Blue Gold, gets its common name from three facts: when held to the light the golden liquid has a bluish hue; drinking it inexplicably turns the tongue blue for several hours; and a pint of the stuff makes the imbiber's eyes shimmer with a faint bluish glow. Its more formal name comes from the fact that most of the meager world's supply of the stuff can be found in the palace at Tara, for Royal Mead is considered by some opinionated Fianna to be the finest-tasting elixir in existence (though as rare as it is, few get the opportunity to taste-test. Imbibers who make a Willpower check against the drink's Gnosis can see clearly in dim light (and in total darkness as if it were dusk) for a scene, but most consider that to be a mere side effect of the heavenly elixir. Royal Mead is made from the honey of the Umbral flower Royalblood.

MET: Make a Willpower Challenge. With success, the drinker suffers no visual penalties from dim light, and the usual penalty for dim light when in total darkness.

Battlemead

Gnosis 6

Battlemead is sweet as regular mead, but burns its way down the throat, exploding in the belly like some serious rotgut. Some Fianna like to take a few swigs before battle. If the imbiber succeeds in a Willpower roll against the mead's Gnosis, he gains a Rage point and can ignore the first wound level sustained in the upcoming combat. Failing the roll results in all Rage roll difficulties being reduced by one for the rest of the

The Secrets of Magic Meads

Not just anyone can make these powerful drinks; the secrets are jealously guarded by a small cadre of master brewers, and the materials needed are even harder to find than the brewers. Such meads can't be made from just any honey; it must be honey derived from magical flowers. Battledew is a brilliant crimson flower, while Royalblood is deepest cobalt. Both these flowers spread in low, thick mats across the western meadows of the Umbral realm known as Arcadia Gateway, and are said to be found in isolated spots of the Fianna Homeland realm as well. Recently, rumors have begun to circulate among the mead-makers that a young Theurge managed to successfully transport and plant the flowers at the heart of her sept's caern, and already others are on a similar quest, though to date none have been successful.

Finding the flower is one thing; collecting the honey is something else. The bees that feed from these faerie flowers are changed by the potent nectar in subtle and unpredictable ways, so extra caution is in order. Since it takes several gallons of honey to make a gallon of mead, it's easy to see why such drinks are highly prized.

A Drink between Friends

Unlike fetishes and many talens, Gnosis is not required to use the magical brews listed here. Anyone can imbibe these draughts and feel their effects. For normal humans, however, the rolls are made at +1 difficulty. The effects last only for one scene. Afterward, a Stamina roll (difficulty equal to the Gnosis of the drink) must be made; a simple failure indicates a slight hangover and a somewhat muddled mind (the drinker is a little hazy on the details of the last few hours), while a botch indicates a full-blown headsplitter with no real recollection of "what the hell I did last night." Not that a human, or even a Kinfolk, is likely to get a taste; this stuff is much too rare and potent to waste on the likes of them. Note that changelings do not suffer the added difficulty or need to make a Stamina roll to avoid side effects; in fact, imbibing may strengthen their fae natures (gain a point of Glamour at Storyteller's option). They must still roll Willpower to benefit from the drinks, however.

And while the Gift: Resist Toxin will work against these rare drinks (usually at a +1 penalty for the more potent mixtures), no self-respecting Fianna would waste one of these wondrous brews that way, unless in sudden, dire need of sobriety.

scene. A botch results in immediate frenzy. Battlemead is made from honey derived from Battledew, a rare flower found in certain Umbral realms.

MET: Make a Willpower Challenge. With success, the drinker gains a Rage Trait and can ignore the first wound level sustained in battle. Losing results in a Simple Test. Winning the Simple Test causes the drinker to lose one Rage Trait. A second loss means frenzy.

Totems

The following totems — just a few of the many possibilities open to Fianna characters — seldom accept non-Fianna packs, as they are tied to Stag and his brood.

Totems of War

Morrigu

Background Cost: 8

The Morrigu, called "Great Queen" or "Mistress of Battles," was a totem of the ancient Celts. Her symbol, and the preferred form of her avatar, was the carrion crow. While she seldom fought, she was a frequent participant in battle, urging her favored heroes to victory. Though a powerful totem, few packs petition for her patronage, for the Morrigu is a harsh mistress, and demands much from her children. Those who fail her or refuse her requests may find themselves the victims of a horrible vengeance. This is especially true of those brave enough to take her as a personal totem.

The Morrigu is a triune spirit; a pack picks *one* of her aspects: Macha, ("the personification of war"), Badb ("Fury"), or Nemain ("Venom"). Members of her packs are often cold and vengeful in their anger, and show no fear in battle. She is especially popular with Galliards and Ahroun, although her followers come from all auspices. The children of Morrigu are respected and feared among the Fianna, and find allies among the Corax (and most especially the three ravens known as the Morrigan), and some faeries.

• **Macha:** The personification of battle. She incites warriors to heroic, if occasionally suicidal, deeds.

Traits: Each pack member gains the Ahroun Gift: Inspiration; the pack gains the Ahroun Gift: Stoking Fury's Furnace, which can be used by any one pack member at a time. Members of her packs gain a point of temporary Glory.

• **Badb:** Badb represents fury unleashed; she is the harbinger of battle madness.

Traits: The pack gains the Gift: Song of Rage (3rd level Galliard), and each packmember receives the ability to enter a berserk frenzy at will. Members of her pack gain a temporary point of Glory but lose two temporary points of Wisdom when first taking this totem.

• **Nemain:** Her name means "venom"; she poisons with fear and cripples by sowing confusion and chaos on the battlefield.

Traits: Each pack member gains a point of Subterfuge; packs receive the Gift: Fog of War. Nemain's packs lose a temporary point of Honor when first taking this totem.

General Traits: All of the Morrigu's Children receive a bonus of -1 difficulty to Social rolls dealing with Corax and raven-spirits.

General Bans: No Child of the Morrigu may ever harm a raven, and all must always show respect for, and give aid to, the Corax. They must never show fear, even in the face of certain death.

MET: Macha's children gain the Ahroun Gift: *Inspiration*, and the pack receives *Stoking Fury's Furnace*, plus one temporary Glory. Babd's children gain the Galliard Gift: *Song of Rage*, and may enter berserk frenzy at will (they must make any normal challenges to end the frenzy, though); they also receive one temporary Glory, but lose two temporary Wisdom. Nemain's children each gain the *Subterfuge* Ability, and her packs receive *Fog of War* (which may be used by one member at a time); they also lose one temporary Honor. All of the Morrigu's children gain a bonus Social Trait when dealing with Corax or raven-spirits.

Herne the Hunter

Background Cost: 4

Herne is the relentless master of the hunt, who often appears as a huge man with a headdress of stag antlers, bearing a boar spear and surrounded by fierce hounds. Stalking through field and forest, he quests for minions of the Wyrm, unleashing his packs to bring them down.

Traits: Herne grants his packs an extra point of Stealth and Survival and the Gift: Sense Wyrm.

Ban: Herne's packs must always pursue and do battle with minions of the Wyrm, regardless of the odds.

MET: Herne's children gain one level each of *Stealth* and *Survival* and the Gift: *Sense Wyrm.*

Totems of Wisdom

Danu

Background Cost: 8

Danu (also known as Dana) was the mother of the Tuatha de Danaan and worshipped by Fianna as an aspect of Gaia as tribe-mother. For worthy packs she holds ancient wisdom and the power to use it. Just as true wisdom is never easy to find, Danu must be sought, for she reveals herself very rarely.

Traits: Danu grants her children the power to sense fae or other supernatural shenanigans; each pack member gains the Gift: Sense the Unnatural. Her packs gain the ability to entrance listeners through taletelling, singing or howling. (Manipulation + Perform, Diff 8); the actual effects are up to the Storyteller. In addition, the pack gains three additional dots of the Ancestors Background; this is not an actual affinity with Garou ancestors, but an ability to learn ancient knowledge and lore by accessing primal memories. All Fianna and most faeries (including many changelings) will recognize and honor children of Danu.

Ban: Danu asks that her children hold a moot in her honor during each of the four seasons, telling tales old and new.

MET: Danu's children gain the Gift: *Sense the Unnatural.* With a Social Challenge (retest with *Performance*, in addition to any other challenges), Danu's packs can entrance their audiences during taletelling, singing or howling; this challenge need not be made against Toreador vampires if the Garou has *Performance* x 3 or higher. The pack also gains three levels of *Ancestors*, as they can access primal memories (this is not a relationship with a particular Ancestor).

Brigid

Background Cost: 5

Brigid is a spirit of inspiration and creativity. The ancient patron of smiths, poets and healers, she stokes the fire in head and heart like a forge.

Traits: Packs of Brigid gain two extra dice to rolls involving Crafts or creative inspiration (e.g., composing a poem or designing an artful device). When attempting to create fetishes, ritemasters enjoy a bonus of -1 difficulty to bind spirits into items crafted by Brigid's children.

Ban: Her packs must never fail to celebrate Imbolc, displaying a new work of art, song or craft.

MET: Brigid's children gain two bonus Traits for use in creative endeavors (such as *Crafts* or *Expression*). Items crafted by Brigid's children are more likely to become fetishes (ritemaster gains a bonus Trait for fetish creation challenges).

Epona

Background Cost: 4

The White Horse Goddess is a master of all equines. None can match her for speed or distance. She even crosses into the Otherworld as easily as one fords a shallow stream. Those who wish to follow her must often endure a hard pursuit to win her favor.

Traits: Horses are at ease around followers of Epona, who don't suffer the Garou's usual +2 penalty to Animal Ken or Ride rolls for horses; each of her children may also cross the Gauntlet at -1 difficulty. Packs gain three

dice to add to running dice pools and a die of Stamina for purposes of l–long-distance running.

Ban: The children of Epona must not eat horseflesh, nor allow cruelty to any equine.

MET: Epona's children do not frighten horses like other Garou, and may ride them without difficulty. The Gauntlet is considered one level lower for them when they wish to cross over. They gain three *Tireless* Traits.

Merlin

Background Cost: 6

A merlin is a dark, quick falcon whose diminutive size belies her ferocity as she hunts low and swift over the moors. Merlin is swift and sharp-eyed as she hunts the Wyrm. She sees many secret things and understands the nature of magic.

Traits: Each pack member gains an extra dot of Alertness and one point of temporary Wisdom Renown. Packs of Merlin gain an extra point of Occult, Rituals, Enigmas and Primal-Urge.

Ban: Merlin commands her packs never to destroy knowledge.

MET: Merlin's children each gain the Mental Trait: *Alert*; one level of the Abilities *Enigmas*, *Occult*, *Primal-Urge* and *Rituals*; and one temporary Wisdom.

Cockerel

Background Cost: 3

Many Garou are a little disdainful of what they consider "domestic" totems. Fianna don't necessarily agree. One example is Cockerel, who crows his warning in a cackle to wake the dead. Loud and proud, he greets the dawn and alerts all to intruders. Though not the "sexiest" totem spirit, a few packs (mostly European) hunt the Wyrm with Cockerel's patronage.

Traits: Cockerel gives all his children the Gift: Sense Wyrm.

Ban: Cockerel's children are forbidden to eat domesticated animals.

MET: Cockerel's children gain *Sense Wyrm*.

Merits and Flaws

Second Sight (2-6 point Merit)

Even a trace of faerie blood produces strange effects in mortals, and many Fianna have more than a trace. Those with the Sight have limited, uncontrollable clairvoyance and precognition, ranging from an intuitive nudge to a view of a scene from the future. For two points, you may know who's calling before you pick up the phone, or feel a visitor is coming. Disorienting flashes of insight and sudden visions of the future and other places are hallmarks of the Sight at higher levels. For six points, visions are relatively detailed and lengthy. Visions may be of real events or metaphorical, but are usually maddeningly hard to unravel until the foretold event occurs. The Sight is unpredictable and comes unbidden, in dream or waking, as a "gut feeling" or blinding flash of insight. The Storyteller should use this for more good than ill, but players should by no means rely on the Sight to as a sure-fire early warning system. Revealed futures may be dark, and, actions taken to prevent the occurrence usually end up precipitating the unwelcome event. People with a very active Sight can be a grim, unhappy lot.

MET: This Merit is best left in the hands of the Storyteller or a Narrator, who drops visions on the character as necessary, based on the level of Merit taken.

Seldom Sleeps (2 point Merit)

Like the Sight, this Merit is the product of a dab of magic in the blood. While rest is still required after exertion, sleep is seldom necessary. One hour a night is fine, and even an hour every three days won't make the Fianna more than a little red-eyed. Such people find themselves pulling more than their share of guard duty.

MET: This Merit does not make you immune to sleep-causing effects, nor negate the need for rest after using taxing Gifts or rituals. The character is not always perky, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed — it's possible to be relaxed but not sleepy. Resting after rituals or Gifts means no combat and no challenges.

Geas (1-7 pt Flaw)

A geas is a mystical prohibition or imperative designed to make life difficult. A central tenet of Celtic life, a geas was a mark of distinction, a sign of destiny. Many of the Fianna of legend carried at least one geas, carried from birth or placed upon them by a spirit or druid. In the old legends, geasa are very common among people of note, from heroes to kings to druids, and the greatest had multiple geasa. Despite their best efforts, the heroes often ended up breaking a geas, a circumstance which always spelled disaster, not necessarily immediately, but soon (Cuchulain faced a choice between his two geasa — "Never reject hospitality" and "Never eat dogmeat" — and soon fell in battle).

The point value of a geas starts with a base of one to four points, depending on how difficult it is to avoid (or fulfill) the ban. A minor geas (easily avoided circumstances) such as "Never drink brandy while sitting at a table" is worth one point. "Must honor every second request" could be worth two points, while "Never harm a Garou, save Black Spirals" might be worth three points and "Never harm a Garou, including Black Spirals" would count for four. The severity of the consequences adds to the point value of the Flaw (e.g., All hair falls out: +0 pt; the loss of Gifts, or all difficulties increase by

1: +1 pts; ostracism by all Garou: +2; imminent death: +3). A broken geas that can be forgiven through quest or atonement is worth one less point.

MET: The Flaw's value is determined by the ban demanded. Easily avoided circumstances are worth one Trait ("Never eat with red-haired men", "Never eat ham", "Never harm a cat"). Bans that demand an ordinary sacrifice are worth two Traits ("Never marry", "Never refuse hospitality"). More extraordinary sacrifices are worth three Traits ("Never drink alcohol", "Remain a virgin"). The value increases up to four Traits for the most difficult bans ("Never harm any Garou, even Black Spirals"). Further Traits may be added by taking on consequences for the broken geas. One Trait may be added for embarrassing, inconvenient or uncomfortable consequences (loss of all body hair, gaining 20 pounds, or the addition of a minor Flaw). Two Traits is added for consequences that are painful or humiliating (loss of an Ability, loss of a Gift, illness or injury). Three Traits result in the most serious consequences (imminent death, going blind, becoming crippled). Choosing a second Flaw as a consequence is permitted, but you gain no extra Traits for it. The Storyteller has final authority on what *Geasa* and consequences are permitted in game.

Spirits

Spirit of the Pool

Rage 4, Gnosis 8, Willpower 8, Essence 20

Charms: Airt Sense, Appear, Healing, Luck, Realm Sense, Purify

Image: This spirit almost never materializes, usually appearing as a vague female face in the swirling depths of a pool. When it does appear, it takes the form of a woman of ethereal beauty, with the chuckle of running water in her voice.

History: In ancient days the Celts revered the spirits which resided in sacred springs, rivers and marshes. The Church co-opted many of the sacred waters, but the spirits remain; their memory lives on in the Lady of the Lake of the King Arthur tales. One of the best-known of the water spirits, Boinn, has been elevated to Incarna status as totem to several packs in Ireland.

Habitat: The Pool Spirit can be found in nonstagnant natural pools, ponds and small lakes. Similar spirits can be found in marshy areas.

Spiritual Correspondences: Healing, good fortune.

Material Correspondences: Clean, clear water. Those looking for healing should drop carved wooden or clay statuettes of themselves into the pool; the figures should indicate the infirmity. Those desiring good fortune throw valuable items (typically gold or silver or fine weapons, although modern-day supplicants have sacrificed rolls of bills or Rolex watches) which are soon lost in the weeds and gloom of the bottom.

Gift Lore: Spirits of the Pool can teach Gifts related to healing, luck and water.

Taboos: So tied to its domain is the spirit that it grows weak and begins to fade if ever it is forced more that a few yards from its home.

Attitude: Cool, calm. If treated with proper respect, the spirit may be friendly; if taken for granted, it will be vindictive, although its tone and apparent attitude will change little either way.

Chiminage: The spirit will assist the supplicant in exchange for the sacrifice of precious offerings. Some have accepted services, such as a pledge by a Garou pack to guard and tend a spring for one moon.

Bean Sí

Rage 5, Gnosis 8, Willpower 7, Essence 20

Charms: Airt Sense, Appear, Fortune, Reform, Materialize, Peek, Track, and the Gifts: Howl of the Banshee, Paralyzing Stare and Trackless Waste

Image: Usually seen as a woman washing out bloody linens in a stream, sometimes old, sometimes young, but usually severe.

History: In the old days, many families in the Celtic lands had a Bean Si (commonly spelled Banshee), a faerie spirit to watch over them. While they may sometimes bring good luck to their families, Bean Si are grim spirits whose visitations are never welcome, for they are omens of impending doom to those unlucky enough to see them.

Habitat: Though more common in the British Isles, some Bean Si have traveled with their families to new lands. Those that have lost their connection to mortal families can be found stalking across open moors or analogous desolate lands in the Fianna's Umbral Homeland. With the mixing of bloodlines in these modern times, a few Bean Si "freelance" by watching the lives and deaths of anyone with a touch of the ancient blood.

Spiritual Correspondences: Bean Si are spirits of doom and fate.

Material Correspondences: They are most likely to respond to a summons in lonely places on windy, rainy nights. Items of clothing from the dead or dying (usually a relative) are common correspondences.

Gift Lore: Bean Si can teach Gifts pertaining to fear, precognition or howling, shouting or screaming (such as Howl of the Unseen). Some Bean Si have

gifted Fianna with *Second Sight* (as per the Merit), but most recipients grow to view it as a curse.

Taboos: The Bean Si will never directly affect the doomed person's fate one way or another. While it may be induced to relating the circumstances of the imminent demise, the description will be enigmatic and vague.

Attitude: Cold, grim and vindictive if not treated with the utmost respect. Oddly, some Fianna report seeing Bean Si act with uncharacteristic kindness toward children and the elderly.

Chiminage: Those who wish her aid must walk a fine line between respectfulness and obsequiousness.

Fintan, the Salmon of Knowledge

Rage 3, Gnosis 9, Willpower 6, Essence 18

Charms: Airt Sense, Realm Sense

Image: Large (about three feet) fish, silvery blue-green with black speckles.

History: In the old tales, Fintan the Salmon ate the hazelnuts from the Tree of Knowledge, thus gaining all knowledge and wisdom. As the tale goes, Fintan was caught by Finegas the druid, who knew that whoever ate the salmon would receive all his wisdom. He ordered young Fionn mac Cumhail to cook the fish up. Fionn burned himself on the sizzling fish and, sucking on his blistered thumb, gained all the fish's knowledge.

Habitat: Salmon can be found in pools or rivers, both in the Penumbra and in the Fianna Homeland Realm.

Spiritual Correspondences: Salmon is a spirit of knowledge and of water.

Material Correspondences: Rivers and lakes are the best places to find the salmon spirit, although it can be found in the sea as well. Fintan has a weakness for hazelnuts.

Gift Lore: Salmon teaches Gifts involving knowledge and insight.

Taboos: Fintan will not willingly leave the water for more than a few minutes, and will never approach open flame for any reason.

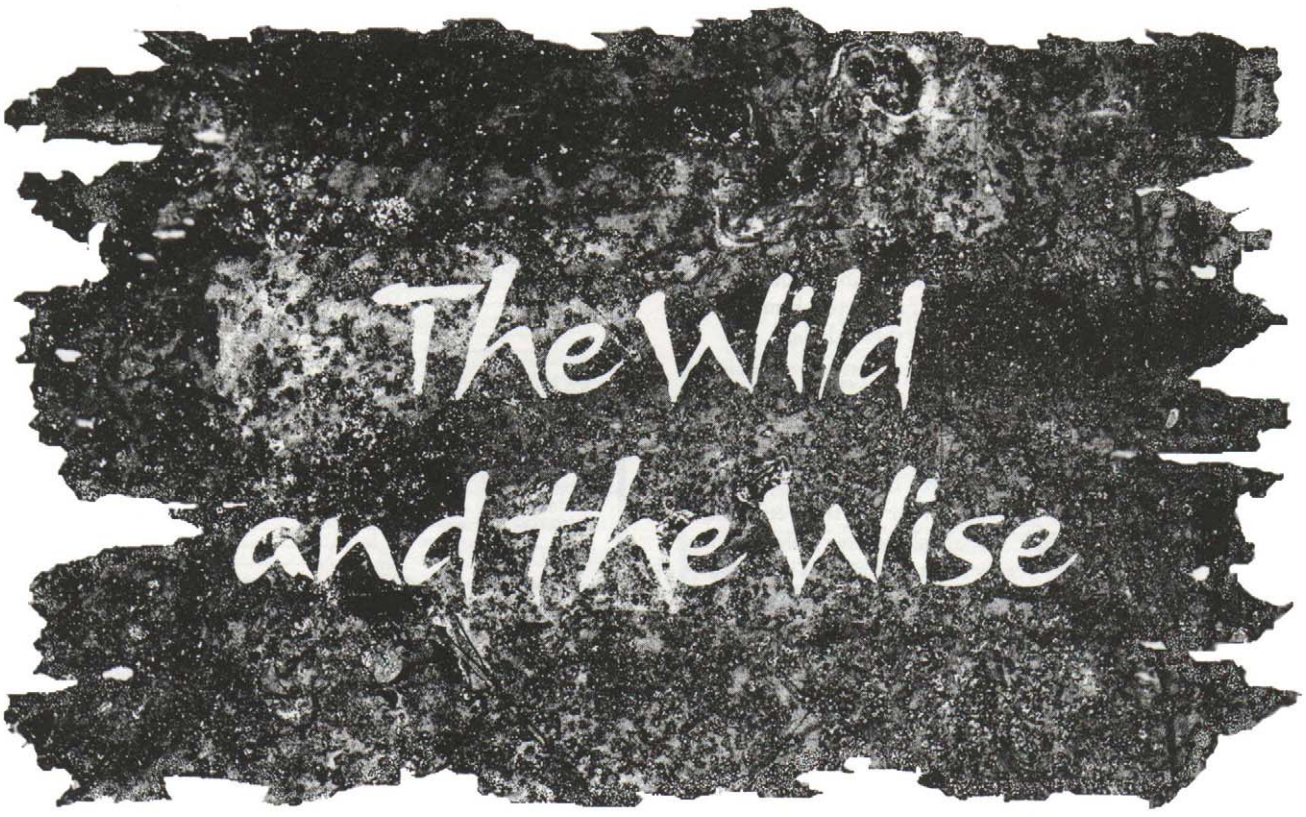
Attitude: Pleasant, if a little cagey. He doesn't take too well to threats of fish dinners, however.

Chiminage: The Salmon of Knowledge usually expects some idle banter before "getting down to business", and if the Garou are too impatient for pleasantries he will likely swim away in a huff. For minor services, such as information, Fintan asks supplicants to refrain from eating any fish for a period of time – usually a month or so. Hazelnuts are also a favorite. For greater favors, such as a Gift, he also asks that jewelry or some small item of value be thrown into the water as a sacrifice.

The Salmon of Knowledge may be induced to answer three questions. His answers may be short or long, but rarely gives what the average man would consider a clear answer. A good grounding in Enigmas (or perhaps a related Lore) is a useful thing when conversing with Fintan.

New Charms

• **Fortune:** Spirits with this charm can affect the fate of an individual, for good or ill. Storytellers may wish to customize the effects to the particular spirit, but here is a standard system: For good fortune, a player may reroll three rolls over the course of the story. For a character cursed with bad fortune, the next three rolls that include a "1" have an additional "1" added to them, diluting the success and increasing the odds of a catastrophic failure.



Like every tribe, the Fianna are far more than their one-sentence summary would suggest. "Celtic werewolves with a penchant for song, drink and dance" is a good starting point, but just that — a starting point. For one, the Fianna aren't *truly* Celtic — they're the creatures that lived in the shadows of Celtic culture, that inspired a few of the regional myths. For another, the Fianna hail from more diverse regions than just Ireland and the United Kingdom; it misses the point to play a Fianna who could have been lifted out of a knotwork-jewelry-and-Chieftains-CDs catalog. (Unless, of course, you're interested in having a character who has to be consistently set straight by his elders... which is entirely valid and interesting in its own right.) It's not the trappings that define a Fianna — it's the spirit.

Of course, there's also more to the Fianna spirit than a simple love of booze, song and hopping into the sack with the nearest good-looking Kinfolk. The pursuit of excellence in all things is a defining factor of the tribe, although the average Fiann is somewhat unwilling to sacrifice the good things in life in order to achieve that excellence. Glorious death is one thing — surviving a maiming, becoming less than complete, that's something else. Their desire to be free of flaws is in many ways the greatest flaw the Fianna have — it's a character trait that may yet cause them no end of grief and pain.

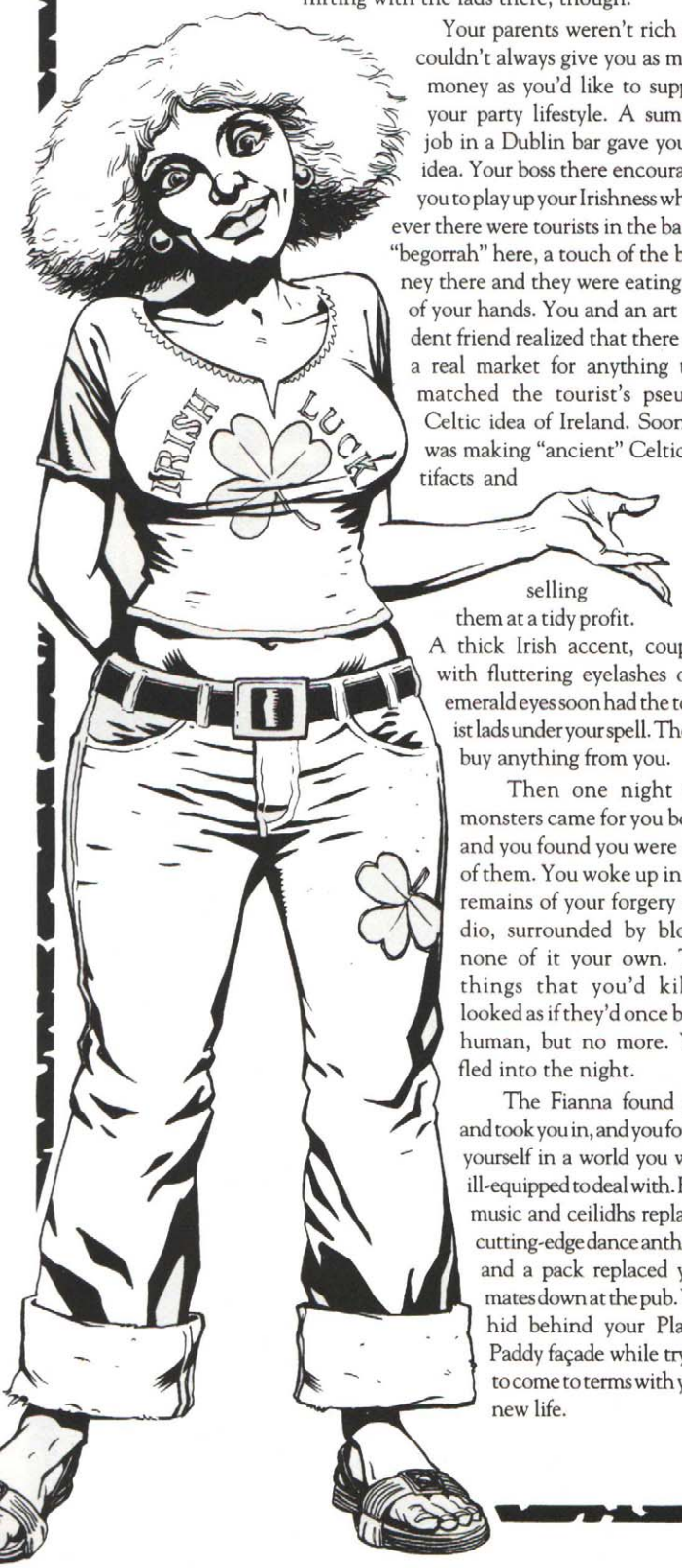
But in some ways, the Fianna's flaws are those of werewolves as a whole. As some might argue, to play a Fianna is to play a Garou writ large — exulting in war, reverently spiritual, intolerant of their enemies and loyal to their friends, all too willing to give in to the animal passions that burn within. All the things that the Garou love, the Fianna love — and to truly love Gaia with all the devotion She deserves, a werewolf is required to love the life She gave him with a deep and abiding passion.

That is, after all, exactly how the Fianna would put it.

Tourist Trap

Quote: *Yes, it's quite genuine. Nearly 2,000 years old. Err...begorrah.*

Prelude: You were born in a middle-class suburb of Dublin, and lived a comfortable middle-class life. You learnt Gaelic half-heartedly, seeing English as the future. After all, all the cool records were in English, and so were the best TV shows. Gaelic was so... backwards. By your mid-teens you were charming your way into bars and nightclubs for some serious dancing and drinking. Your strong Catholic upbringing stopped you doing much more than flirting with the lads there, though.



Your parents weren't rich and couldn't always give you as much money as you'd like to support your party lifestyle. A summer job in a Dublin bar gave you an idea. Your boss there encouraged you to play up your Irishness whenever there were tourists in the bar. A "begorrah" here, a touch of the blarney there and they were eating out of your hands. You and an art student friend realized that there was a real market for anything that matched the tourist's pseudo-Celtic idea of Ireland. Soon he was making "ancient" Celtic artifacts and selling them at a tidy profit.

A thick Irish accent, coupled with fluttering eyelashes over emerald eyes soon had the tourist lads under your spell. They'd buy anything from you.

Then one night the monsters came for you both, and you found you were one of them. You woke up in the remains of your forgery studio, surrounded by blood, none of it your own. The things that you'd killed looked as if they'd once been human, but no more. You fled into the night.

The Fianna found you and took you in, and you found yourself in a world you were ill-equipped to deal with. Folk music and ceilidhs replaced cutting-edge dance anthems and a pack replaced your mates down at the pub. You hid behind your Plastic Paddy façade while trying to come to terms with your new life.

Fianna

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Breed: Homid
Auspice: Ragabash
Camp:

Pack Name:
Pack Totem:
Concept: Tourist Trap

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●○○○	Charisma	●●●●○	Perception	●●●○○
Dexterity	●●●●○	Manipulation	●●●○○	Intelligence	●●○○○
Stamina	●●●○○	Appearance	●●●○○	Wits	●●●●○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●●●○○	Animal Ken	○○○○○	Computer	●●○○○
Athletics	●●○○○	Crafts	●○○○○	Enigmas	○○○○○
Brawl	○○○○○	Drive	○○○○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	○○○○○	Etiquette	●○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	●●○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Linguistics	●○○○○
Expression	●●●○○	Leadership	○○○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	○○○○○	Melee	○○○○○	Occult	○○○○○
Primal-Urge	○○○○○	Performance	●●●○○	Politics	●●○○○
Streetwise	●●○○○	Stealth	○○○○○	Rituals	○○○○○
Subterfuge	●●●○○	Survival	○○○○○	Science	●●○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	Gifts
Contacts	●●○○○	Smell of Man	
Kinfolk	●○○○○	Blur of the Milky Eye	
Resources	●●○○○	Persuasion	
	○○○○○		
	○○○○○		

Renown
Glory ○○○○○○○○○○
Honor ●●○○○○○○○○
Wisdom ●○○○○○○○○○

Rank 1

Rage ●●○○○○○○○○

Gnosis ●○○○○○○○○○

Willpower ●●●○○○○○○○

Health

Bruised	
Hurt	-1
Injured	-1
Wounded	-2
Mauled	-2
Crippled	-5
Incapacitated	

Tribal Weakness
LOW SELF CONTROL: ALL WILLPOWER ROLLS ARE AT +1 DIFFICULTY

The promiscuity and violence on display, not to mention the pagan beliefs and very real spirit world shocked you to the very core of your being. You'd never really gotten to like beer and whiskey, either. Designer drinks are more your thing.

While you love the sense of belonging, something you'd always been searching for but never found, you can't help feeling that this obsession with the past is half the reason the Garou are struggling. If you can just bring your pack into the 21st century, you'd maybe have a chance. Sometimes you count yourself lucky you weren't raised amongst Kin, and other times you really wish you had been.

So, now you're back on the streets of Dublin, but seeing the city with new eyes. The things of the Wyrm seem to cluster round the tourist traps and cheap hotels of the city. When you find something or someone that needs dealing with, you're back with the pack as fast as you can be.

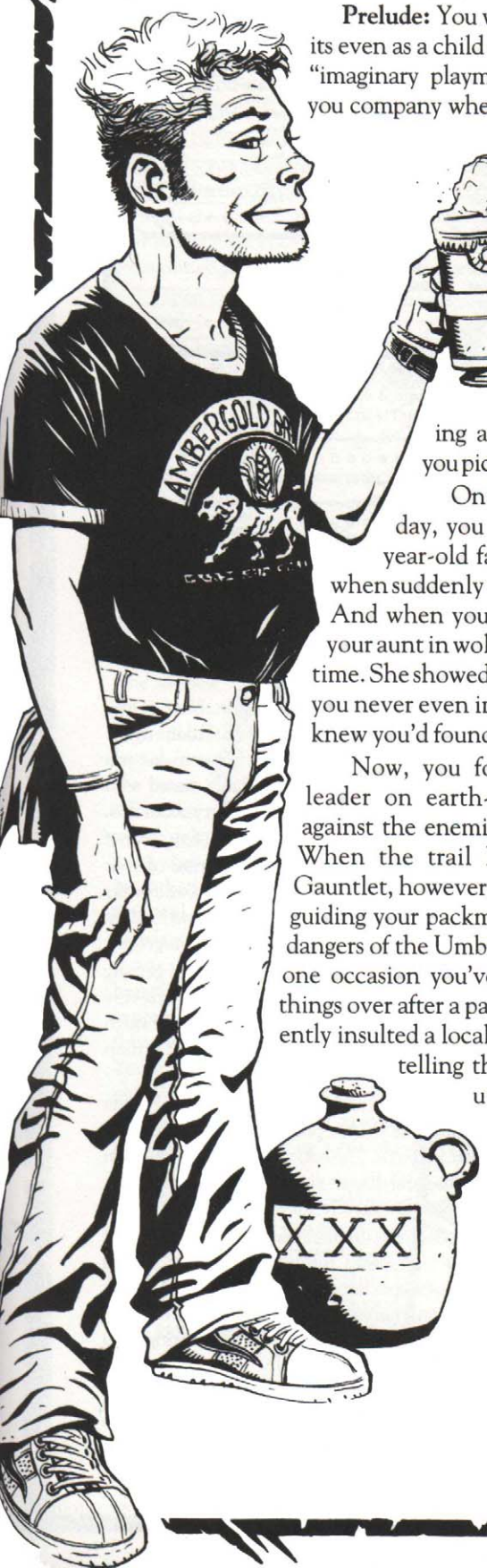
Concept: You're a city teenager trying to make your way in a culture that sometimes seems like a parody of your history books come to life. You play to the preconceived notions of your tribe while doing your best to introduce some modern ideas before it's too late. At the same time, you're trying to reconcile Garou beliefs with your Catholic upbringing.

Roleplaying Notes: Making your way in a culture that often seems a thousand years out of date is no easy task sometimes. You're good at faking it when you have to, but often you can't help but debunk some of the self-righteousness and cultural purity notions that you see around you. You try and keep your mocking gentle and subtle enough not to cause trouble, but sometimes your unease that the Fianna are so trapped in their past gets the better of you, and you get cutting. Then you rely on your charm and looks to get you out of trouble.

Equipment: A good wardrobe of fashionable clothes, a CD player, a bag full of "genuine" Celtic artifacts.

Ambergold Brewer

Quote: *C'mon. I'm not even legal, but even I can tell the difference between Speyside and Highland Whiskeys! But never mind, try something of a more local vintage. Just sip it, now. Moonshine has a way of ambushing you.*



Prelude: You were aware of spirits even as a child — they were your "imaginary playmates." They kept you company when your parents ignored and neglected you. Your aunt, the only adult who paid attention to you, knew a lot about brewing and distilling, and you picked up the hobby.

On a particular birthday, you studied your 16-year-old face in the mirror when suddenly the world shifted. And when you turned, you saw your aunt in wolf form for the first time. She showed you a spirit world you never even imagined, and you knew you'd found your new home.

Now, you follow your pack leader on earth-bound missions against the enemies of the Fianna. When the trail leads across the Gauntlet, however, you take charge, guiding your packmates through the dangers of the Umbra. On more than one occasion you've had to smooth things over after a packmate inadvertently insulted a local spirit, afterwards telling the offender in no uncertain terms how he'd screwed up and what to do next time.

FIANNA™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Breed: Homid
Auspice: Theurge
Camp:

Pack Name:
Pack Totem:
Concept: Ambergold Brewer

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●○○○○	Charisma	●●●○○	Perception	●●●●○
Dexterity	●●●○○	Manipulation	●●○○○	Intelligence	●●●○○
Stamina	●●○○○	Appearance	●●●○○	Wits	●●●○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●●○○○	Animal Ken	○○○○○	Computer	○○○○○
Athletics	○○○○○	Crafts	●●●○○	Enigmas	●●●○○
Brawl	●○○○○	Drive	●○○○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	○○○○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	●●○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Linguistics	●○○○○
Expression	●●○○○	Leadership	○○○○○	Medicine	●○○○○
Intimidation	○○○○○	Melee	○○○○○	Occult	●●○○○
Primal-Urge	●●○○○	Performance	●●○○○	Politics	○○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Stealth	●○○○○	Rituals	●●○○○
Subterfuge	●○○○○	Survival	●○○○○	Science	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	Gifts
Ancestors	●●●○○	Persuasion	
Kinfolk	●○○○○	Spirit Speech	
Pure Breed	●○○○○	Faerie Light	
Rites	●●○○○		
	○○○○○		

Renown

Glory ○○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□
Honor ○○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□
Wisdom ●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Rank 1

Rage ●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Gnosis ●●●●○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Willpower ●●●●○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Health

Bruised		□
Hurt	-1	□
Injured	-1	□
Wounded	-2	□
Mauled	-2	□
Crippled	-5	□
Incapacitated		□

Tribal Weakness

LOW SELF CONTROL: ALL WILLPOWER ROLLS ARE AT +1 DIFFICULTY

Such outbursts are rare, though; you'd rather let the leaders lead while you learn of spirits – both alcoholic and Umbral. Your rites, knowledge and good sense make you indispensable to the pack, and some of the elder Theurges are starting to take notice as well.

Concept: Though you're underage, your ambergold brews are the talk of the sept. But that's not good enough; you want to learn the secrets of faerie meads and the most potent of whiskeys, one day taking your place among the master brewers for your tribe.

Roleplaying Hints: You ask a million questions, but pleasantly enough to not be too irritating. You're friendly and eager to impress. You seem a little spacey sometimes, because of spiritual distractions. You'd rather help than lead, but your pack has come to rely on you in matters of the spirit world. Where the others act, you watch, question, and think.

Equipment: Distilling equipment, jugs of homemade mead, whiskey and moonshine.

Matchmaker

Quote: *He is the mate for you. My instincts say so. Make your mov tonight.*

Prelude: You knew that something was different about you for as long as you can remember. While your littermates all acted on instinct, sometimes you would watch, wait and make a decision before acting. The other wolves were obviously uncomfortable around you but your skill in taking down prey made you too valuable to ignore.

After a few winters, it became apparent that the new, young alpha of the pack was showing more attention to you than to your mother. Most of the other females and a good few of the males were submitting to you already. In fact, you were on the verge of supplanting your mother as alpha female when your First Change happened and your Dad came for you.

Your father was nothing like you expected. Not long after he took you back to the magic place, he changed into the form of a large, bearded human and he seemed to expect you to do the same. While you took what time you could in your breed form, most of the caern's business seemed to be conducted in Homid or Crinos, to your consternation.

Spending time in human form was often uncomfortable for you. Garou and human society was so odd and complex compared to life in the pack, and you longed for those simple days. When some males you perceived to be Alphas made a move on you, you gladly mated with them. You couldn't understand why your father got so angry about this.

Your reputation grew for cutting to the heart of a problem, even if you did get people's backs up sometimes with the directness of your advice. Where you have had particular success is in matchmaking. Courtship in wolf packs was simple and direct. You can see the same underlying currents in Garou and Kinfolk relations and you do your best to make sure the most suitable mates come together.

While your father was happy to mate with wolf Kin, you've found getting other Garou to do the same an uphill struggle, but you're willing to persevere for the good of the Sept. The homids and their Kin are easier, though, although some decry your direct advice as unromantic. You've found that this opinion often changes after a few drinks.

Concept: You're a wolf that has found a niche in the very human Fianna society by using your instincts and nose to spot potential parings that will bear strong young for your extended pack. The odd mating rituals between Garou and Kin sometimes confuse and disgust you, but you can cut to the chase in your advice in the way no homid advisor ever can.

Roleplaying Notes: You approach the discussions of your pack and sept with an insight and directness that sometimes resolves the situation and sometimes gets you into a fight. Your particular specialty is bringing Kin and Garou together, cutting through the complicated emotions humans lay over their desire to mate. You have very little concept of romance in the traditional sense, but little brings you more pleasure than a well-matched couple mating successfully.

Equipment: A keen sense of smell, basic and somewhat flattering human clothes and a spare bottle or two of whiskey stashed away for when the lovelorn need assistance.

Fianna™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Breed: Lupus
Auspice: Philodox
Camp:

Pack Name:
Pack Totem:
Concept: Matchmaker

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●○○○	Charisma	●●●○○	Perception	●●●●○
Dexterity	●●○○○	Manipulation	●●●○○	Intelligence	●●●○○
Stamina	●●○○○	Appearance	●●○○○	Wits	●●●○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●●●○○	Animal Ken	●●●○○	Computer	○○○○○
Athletics	●●○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Enigmas	●●○○○
Brawl	●●○○○	Drive	○○○○○	Investigation	●○○○○
Dodge	●●○○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	●●●○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Linguistics	●○○○○
Expression	○○○○○	Leadership	○○○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	●○○○○	Melee	○○○○○	Occult	●●○○○
Primal-Urge	●●●○○	Performance	○○○○○	Politics	○○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Stealth	●●●○○	Rituals	○○○○○
Subterfuge	●○○○○	Survival	●●●●○	Science	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	Gifts
Kinfolk	●●●○○	Truth of Gaia	
Pure Breed	●○○○○	Persuasion	
Totem	●○○○○	Heightened Senses	
	○○○○○		
	○○○○○		

Renown

Glory ○○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□
Honor ●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□
Wisdom ○○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Rank: 1

Rage ●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Gnosis ●●●●●○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Willpower ●●●●○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Health

Bruised		□
Hurt	-1	□
Injured	-1	□
Wounded	-2	□
Mauled	-2	□
Crippled	-5	□
Incapacitated		□

Tribal Weakness

LOW SELF CONTROL: ALL WILLPOWER ROLLS ARE AT +1 DIFFICULTY

The Mule in Black

Quote: *It's the music of our people and it tells of our struggles, not those of people an ocean away.*

Prelude: Your birth was a terrible shame on a proud sept that prided itself on its strict adherence to the Litany. Your father was never identified, and your mother left the sept to join a band of Rovers as soon as you were old enough to fend for yourself. It was that or death for both mother and child, or at least so judged the Philodox. You missed your mother terribly. At least she had been able to protect you from the others. Now, they had a clear field.

On those few occasions when you had time alone you would howl sad songs to yourself, venting your misery to Gaia. One of the older Galliards took notice of your songs and started teaching you the songs of the Fianna. You proved an adept pupil and learning and performing them under his stern eye became your chief joy in life. It even earned you a grudging respect from some of your caern mates.

Then came your First Change, and with it the ability to move amongst humans other than Kin, with a pair of pants covering your deformed leg. Those days you spent away from the caern were a blessed relief and you spent more and more time in town, even venturing into some of the bars once in a while. One evening, you heard the most incredible sound coming from a local shop. The sadness tinged with joy and hope in the music and the words felt as if they had been dredged out of your own soul. You went in and asked the storekeeper what it was. "Country & Western," he replied. You knew you'd found your true music. You devoured this new sound whenever you could. You took to frequenting bars that played Country & Western, and even saw some live acts. You even managed to scrounge up some old 8-track recordings.

While you continued to learn the old songs, you also experimented with this new style of music. The sept elders' continued refusal to allow you to join a pack gave you plenty of time to practice — and a lot of material for your own songs. When the old Galliard passed on, dying in one last battle with his old pack, you sang with such passion at his wake that the others could no longer ignore you.

So now you tell tales of your sept and their doings in a bastardized form of C&W that suits the Garou tongue. A few of the older werewolves are scandalized by the idea, but younger members of the sept, Garou and Kin alike, are entranced by your new approach.

Concept: You're a young Galliard that has chosen Country & Western as a way of expressing yourself. The music seems to hold a strong resonance for you, reflecting the pains and joys of your life as a despised mule amongst a traditionalist sept. Many of the younger Garou have taken to you, because you sing a style of music that's more familiar to them than the Celtic sound so many others favor. You've also taken to singing guest spots at local bars, with some success there, too. Many people have said that you reach a place of melancholy that few other singers have ever managed.

Roleplaying Notes: You've always deferred to other Fianna, more out of fear than anything. Now, however, you're a little more confident. Your success as a singer in the human town and your growing renown as a Galliard have at last allowed you to join a pack, and you're looking forward to singing songs of battle and loss in equal measure.

Equipment: A guitar, a Stetson, a second-hand, beat-up 8-track player with some Hank Williams Sr., Johnny Cash and Patsy Cline tapes and a sheaf of songs hastily scribbled down.

Fianna™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Breed: Metis
Auspice: Galliard
Camp:

Pack Name:
Pack Totem:
Concept: The Mule in Black

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●○○○	Charisma	●●●●○	Perception	●●●○○
Dexterity	●●●○○	Manipulation	●●●●○	Intelligence	●●●○○
Stamina	●●○○○	Appearance	●●○○○	Wits	●●●○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	○○○○○	Animal Ken	●●○○○	Computer	○○○○○
Athletics	○○○○○	Crafts	●●○○○	Enigmas	●○○○○
Brawl	●●○○○	Drive	○○○○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	●●●○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	●●○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Linguistics	●○○○○
Expression	●●○○○	Leadership	○○○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	○○○○○	Melee	●●○○○	Occult	●○○○○
Primal-Urge	○○○○○	Performance C&W Singing	●●●●○	Politics	●●○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Stealth	●●○○○	Rituals	○○○○○
Subterfuge	○○○○○	Survival	●●●○○	Science	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	Gifts
Allies	●○○○○	Sense Wyrm	
Contacts	●○○○○	Call of the Wyld	
Kinfolk	●●●○○	Persuasion	
Totem	●●○○○		
	○○○○○		

Renown: Glory ●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□ Honor ○○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□ Wisdom

Rage: ●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Gnosis: ●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Willpower: ●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Health:

Bruised		❑
Hurt	-1	❑
Injured	-1	❑
Wounded	-2	❑
Mauled	-2	❑
Crippled	-5	❑
Incapacitated		❑

Tribal Weakness: LOW SELF CONTROL: ALL WILLPOWER ROLLS ARE AT +1 DIFFICULTY

Master of the Forge

Quote: *What you need, lass, is a good stout spear, and I'm just the man to – ow! What'd I say?*

Prelude: Born on the Isle of Man from a union between Kinfolk, you never realized the difficulty of your situation; your mother was of Fianna stock, your father from the Get of Fenris. Though you didn't know it at the time, both tribes watched you carefully, and you had more than your share of aunts and uncles coming to visit, telling you wild stories about Beowulf and Fionn mac Cumhail.

You Changed at an early age, and when presented to the spirits, your maternal heritage won out. Still, you became close to your father's Changing kin, sometimes acting as a go-between when misunderstandings cropped up between tribes. Although you didn't know if you could endure the constant sacrifices and tests demanded by the Get, you certainly respected the emphasis they placed on the virtue of strength.

Casting about for a profession to channel your youthful energy (and show off your already-impressive physique), you apprenticed with an elderly Get who taught you the secrets of the forge, secrets forgotten by mortal smiths. You quickly showed your aptitude as a blacksmith, forging pokers, lanterns and horseshoes. Later, you branched out into weaponsmithing, crafting spears and swords fine enough for fetishes. By day, you work at a living history village, selling utensils and trinkets to tourists; by night you arm the island's Garou. In battle you are armed to the teeth, using only weapons you crafted; your axes, swords and spears are "proofed" in Black Spiral or fomori blood before you pass them on. After all, you take great pride in your handiwork, and never let an inferior blade bear your mark.

Concept: Fire, Air, Earth and Water — with your skill and tireless strength you combine the four elements into fine weapons of war. Fianna and Get prize what you produce, and you take pride that, every night, some Wyrm-spawn is feeling your steel burn through its belly.

Roleplaying Hints: Generally friendly and outgoing, you get real nervy when the moon phases your way. You use hammer and anvil to beat out the fire that flares within you; your best work is done during the full of the moon. You value your own strength as your greatest attribute, and view your work as a way to lend that strength to others.

Equipment: Forge, iron ingots, fine spear, spark-pocked jeans.

Fianna™

Name:	Breed: Homid	Pack Name:
Player:	Auspice: Ahroun	Pack Totem:
Chronicle:	Camp:	Concept: Forgemaster

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●●●○	Charisma	●●●○○	Perception	●●○○○
Dexterity	●●●○○	Manipulation	●●○○○	Intelligence	●●○○○
Stamina	●●●○○	Appearance	●●○○○	Wits	●●●●○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●●○○○	Animal Ken	○○○○○	Computer	○○○○○
Athletics	●●●○○	Crafts	●●●○○	Enigmas	●○○○○
Brawl	●●●○○	Drive	○○○○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	○○○○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	○○○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Linguistics	●●○○○
Expression	●○○○○	Leadership	○○○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	●●○○○	Melee	●●●○○	Occult	○○○○○
Primal-Urge	●●●○○	Performance	●●○○○	Politics	●○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Stealth	●○○○○	Rituals	●○○○○
Subterfuge	○○○○○	Survival	●○○○○	Science	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	Gifts
Allies	●○○○○	Master of Fire	
Kinfolk	●●○○○	Falling Touch	
[illegible]ntor	●●○○○	Resist Toxin	
[illegible]urces	●○○○○		
	○○○○○		

Renown

Glory
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[illegible]dom
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Rage

●●●●●●●○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Gnosis

●●●○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Willpower

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

Health

Bruised		□
Hurt	-1	□
Injured	-1	□
Wounded	-2	□
Mauled	-2	□
Crippled	-5	□
Incapacitated		□

Tribal Weakness

LOW SELF CONTROL: ALL WILLPOWER ROLLS ARE AT +1 DIFFICULTY

Legends

Hygwydd ab Iaen

Hygwydd ab Iaen was an elder of the Dyn a drowyd yn flaidd near Oswestry two centuries before the Norman invasion. A brash youth, his wisdom as a sept leader was hard-won. But he had the blood of heroes and the touch of leadership, and earned the respect, and later allegiance, of the Garou of Cymru. His sept never wanted for warriors, as young Garou from across the land gathered to his standard. More than once his followers urged him to challenge for the kingship in Tara, but his heart was rooted in his native woods. In fact, he insulted the Ard Righ; commanded to appear at Tara for a feast, he replied that he'd seen the palace and it held nothing for him he couldn't find on his own soil. His casual defiance crystallized the rift between the Irish Fianna and the insular Dyn a drowyd yn flaidd, and set a precedent that was often repeated for several hundred years.

Hygwydd was quite active against the Get of Fenris in a local blood feud that had already lasted a dozen years and deprived both septs of valuable warriors. Saxons on the border had reason to stay out of the forests during the day and behind barred doors by night, for Hygwydd's pack hounded Get Kin as often as they quested for the Wyrm. But years of strife cost Gaia many Garou and more Kinfolk, and the elder leader's wisdom cooled his heart's cry for vengeance. As warriors massed in Caledonia for the final battles against the Black Spirals, he secretly met with the Get's sept leader, who agreed that there were worthier adversaries than each other. So they planned so seal the rift by fighting side by side in the far north. They were ambushed by unknown Garou — to this day no one knows which side did it — but when the Fianna arrived, they found their foe dead and their leader unconscious and dying. The local fae could heal him, but it would take a year and a day to do so. He and his closest retainers were placed in a burial mound. It was decided to let the Get think he was dead so that he could surprise them in the future. A sidhe by the name of Kerenhyr ap Gwydion vowed a mighty oath to guard the dun until his son Degan pronounced the magic phrase to awaken his father. The words were known to Degan only, so when he died in battle two months later, that caused a problem. No other knew the righ's whereabouts or even that he was still alive. A few centuries later, the sidhe left the world... but not Kerenhyr, who waited faithfully, his powers keeping the place hidden and timeless.

But now, the fae lord's powers are failing. The valley is being developed, and every time a new building is put up or a road improved, the Weaver drains the enchantments. He knows that sooner rather than later people will stumble upon his place and all will be lost. Unless a Fianna discovers and speaks the words of power, reviving the slumbering warriors and freeing the ancient fae before the modern world withers him....

Dawn Sentry, of the Night Eyes Pack

The members of the Night Eyes pack come from the Whispering Rover camp. During a foray to Canada, their pack leader, Dawn Sentry, was impressed by the Wendigo ability to disappear into the forest. He asked one where he could learn how to be so stealthy, and the Garou laughed and said, "You can ask the great Wendigo. Only he can teach you."

So Dawn Sentry traveled into the Umbra, searching for Wendigo's realm. She found it, a forlorn land where bitter winds howled across ice and snow. For hours she wandered undaunted where the cold bit though parka and fur and flesh, before great Wendigo rose from the ice to face the young Garou. Wendigo laughed at the foolish young Fianna, but was impressed enough at her courage to grant her request. "Before I decide," the Incarna warned, " you must be tested. I must taste your flesh to see if you are too Wyrm-tainted to learn." Dawn acquiesced, and didn't flinch as the cannibal spirit's enormous jaws closed on her torso. Ribs snapped, lungs collapsed, and Dawn crumpled in agony. Wendigo licked his bloody lips, satisfied. "Very well, I shall teach you what you want to know. But there are conditions. First, you may not share my gift outside your pack. Second, those you teach, you must first taste as I have tasted you. Third, you must never harm my people, the firstcomers to the Pure Lands." In agony almost beyond hearing, blind with pain, Dawn weakly nodded assent. Her clotting wounds were rimed with frost. Wendigo grinned toothily, and licked his lips. "You tasted fine, Wyrmcomer. Should we ever meet again, I'll have the rest of you. And if you break your vow to me, we *will* meet again."

Dawn never fully recovered from the bite, but she learned the Gift of Camouflage, and passed it on to her pack. All bear the jagged scars of a Crinos bite, though none so prominently as their leader. Although they still range across Europe working as advance scouts, raiders and messengers, they have found their trails leading towards North America with increasing regularity.

The story of the Night Eyes Pack (sometimes referred to as the "Once Bitten Pack")has drifted from sept to sept; when in Wendigo country the pack meets with less derision than a Fianna should expect — perhaps even a little respect. Dawn Sentry's brave sacrifice has had the unintended side effect of turning her pack into unofficial spokespeople for her tribe. In at least two recent disputes, the Wendigo demanded to speak to the Night Eyes rather than the local Fianna.

Bale-eye and the Stonewall Pack

Perhaps the most renowned Fianna pack in existence, the Stonewall Pack had its genesis at the Third Battle of Tara. When the Black Spiral Dancers shattered the parapets, the defenders were stunned and confused for several crucial moments. Only Gavin Mac Fionn, heir of the high king, leapt forward to plant his pack in the breach. It was he who broke the first rush with the infamous spear, the Gae Bolga. When he fell, his second retrieved the spear and slew a great packleader before herself falling. By this point, a dozen more Fianna had rushed to defend the breach, then a score more. The fight for the gap raged with utter ferocity, and in minutes combatants had to climb over the dead to reach each other. In the hail of arrows, spears, bullets and balefire, with spears and swords and claws painting the world in shades of red, corpses filled the gap. Acts of selfless sacrifice and heroic valor were too numerous to be acknowledged or even noticed in the meatgrinder.

When the evil tide finally ebbed, only seven of the gap's defenders were alive. Tied with bonds tempered in battle and quenched in blood, they commemorated the defense by forming a pack dedicated to aiding in desperate struggles across the globe. The Ard Righ honored them by naming the pack himself: "...for when the ancient wall failed they became the wall. Therefore, ever after the Black Spiral Dancers will hear the name of the Stonewall Pack, and know dread." The pack chose Boar as their patron because of the totem's never-say-die attitude and the fact that it's most dangerous when cornered.

Since that blood-forged beginning, they have fought for Gaia from Alaska to the Amazon, and from Europe to Australia (and a number of Umbral locales besides). For nearly a decade, the pack was all-Fianna. A Get of Fenris challenged to join the illustrious band, and impressed the packmembers so much that they set aside tribal rivalries. Since then, Garou of any tribe who meet the rigorous standards may be considered for membership. Prospective members must pass tests of honor, wisdom, and

strength, and must win the unanimous support of the pack to join. Currently, the pack includes five Fianna, a Get, a Silent Strider and a Silver Fang.

The pack carries a banner that includes name-glyphs of all current or former members. There are currently 34 glyphs on the fabric. There are three conspicuously blank spots; these belonged to three Garou that betrayed their people, and were stricken from the ranks. At the bottom of the banner are two smaller glyphs representing those that died in the gap at Tara. Three dying standard bearers asked the Theurge to bind their spirits with the banner; these guardians circle the fetish in the Umbra, defending their charge even after death.

One founding member survives; he is called Bale-eye because of the hideous scarring he received from a dose of Black Spiral balefire. Pack leader until a few years ago, his counsel still carries great weight among the pack, though his strength and speed are not what they once were. He was once a packmate of Bron mac Fionn — they saved each other many times over on that bloody Beltane — and he now wonders if his old friend has fallen too far under the spell of the subtle and capricious fae. Not that he would ever move against the Ard Righ, but those faeries ought to be watched more closely.

Ard Righ Bron Mac Fionn

Bron has never experienced anything but a life amongst the Fianna. Born to a Garou mother and Kin father in the Sept of the Tri-Spiral in Ireland, he lived in and around the bawn of the caern all through his childhood. After his First Change he rose to the position of the caern's leading war bard before eventually claiming the position of Righ after challenging the previous incumbent. He had caught the eye of the Ard Righ of the Fianna, Brendan O'Rourke, who had brought the government of the Fianna back to Tara in Ireland after nearly 30 years of rule from America.

Bron, who took the name Mac Fionn as all Righs of the Tri Spiral sept have, became his appointed successor in the minds of most Fianna in Ireland, even if it was never made official. When O'Rourke left for an Umbral quest following the devastating attack on Tara by Black Spiral Dancers, Bron was voted in as a matter of formality by the Council of Righs.

Bron rapidly set about trying to reaffirm and reinforce the old alliances with the fae. He appointed a troll as his bodyguard after a particularly impressive display of martial prowess and filled the halls of Tara with Changelings for the first time in decades, if not centuries. However, fae politics turned out to be more complex than he expected. He devoted more and more of his time to building alliances with the ever-mercurial fae, to the growing disgust of many of his advisors. He has delegated the task of dealing with the growing crisis in Scotland to Son-of-Moonlight, his successor at Tri-Spiral, claiming that the negotiations were at a delicate stage.

Some are concerned that he is under a fae glamour, but the truth is more mundane than that. Bron is ill-equipped for the multitude of demands on an Ard Righ. The Fianna value family and pack above all things, and a Garou who keeps no counsel but his own is unlikely to be able to rule them successfully. Bron is merely using his relationship with the fae as an excuse to avoid his responsibilities.

Bron is a tall, burly man with a shock of red hair tinged with gray and a beard to match. His body is liberally scattered with scars, including a prominent one down his left cheek. He appears to be early middle age and his expression tends to swing wildly from welcoming smiles to intimidating scowls. His Crinos and Lupus forms are black with bright green eyes.

Since his accession to the position of Ard Righ, Bron's tendency to listen to no counsel but his own has grown. Increasingly, he makes no pretense of listening to others. He is arrogant, driven and taciturn, apparently quite confident in his place as leader of the Fianna and his decision to pursue the old alliances with the fae. He desperately hopes that his dream of allied fae, humans and Garou will stave off the Apocalypse and is committed to achieving it at all costs.

Son-of-Moonlight

While Bron has grown more remote and distant from his people in the last few years, Son-of-Moonlight, his successor at Tri Spiral, has mellowed. Once a hard-line Eire Fundamentalist, his relationship with of all things, a human woman, and his role in managing the crisis in Scotland has made him aware that the Fianna need all their resources, homid and lupus, Garou and Kin if they are to survive to fight in the coming Apocalypse.

While the Theurge's memories of his early life in a zoo still anger him, he's ashamed of his time as a new Impergium advocate. His relationship, born one Imbolc night and rock solid since, has had a profound affect on his perception of the world, as he has come to understand the virtues of humanity rather than always seeing their failings. As a result, he's become one of the most outspoken critics of the Mother's Fundamentalists, and as a lupus, his voice carries significant weight. While some have tried to mock him for his fierce attachment to Niamh Plannery, he's rapidly showing them exactly how much of an alpha wolf he is.

He's also taken the time to develop his skills as a Theurge, and his knowledge of rites is now unsurpassed amongst the Garou of Ireland. His successes as a tactical leader and willingness to listen to the advice of those skilled enough to warrant such attention have made him popular with Fianna right across Europe, and some word of his skill has passed to the Americas, too. The involvement of a number of American packs in the fight to reclaim the Caern of Gloom and Sorrow in Scotland has increased his renown within the tribe as a whole.

In recent months he's been reaching out to other tribes in the hope of seeing some form of co-operation. He sees that they have more in common with each other than they do with either humans or wolves. He's entered into preliminary negotiations with Margrave Yuri Konietzko through a proxy, Scots Fiann Robert "Rab" McNabb, but remains wary but respectful of the powerful Shadow Lord Theurge.

Image: Son has a crimson/brown coat in his Lupus and Crinos forms, switching to dark brown hair and green eyes in Homid. He's in his early thirties, stands nearly six feet tall and has s distinctly feral edge to him in all forms. Many women find this very attractive, but his heart is given to one alone.

Roleplaying Notes: Like many lupus, you've had a hard time coming to terms with the human side of your nature, but the last couple of years have changed all that. You're fiercely in love with both Niamh and your tribe, You've finally come to understand that there's far more to the tribe than Ireland and much, much more to defeating the Wyrm than killing humans. Your actions have the directness and ruthlessness of an alpha wolf coupled with the love of life and Kin of a good Fianna. Your ruthlessness is coupled with a genuine concern for those under you, and a growing sense of the spiritual as a driving part of Garou existence rather than merely as a source of Gifts and power.

Breed: Lupus

Auspice: Theurge

Rank: 5

Physical: Strength 2 (4/6/5/3), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 4 (6/7/7/6)

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 2 (1/0/0/0)

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 2, Empathy 2, Expression 2, Intimidation 3, Primal-Urge 5, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Animal Ken 5, Crafts 1, Melee 2, Leadership 3, Performance 3, Stealth 4, Survival 4

Knowledges: Enigmas 3, Linguistics 1, Occult 4, Rituals 5

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Totem 2, Allies 4

Rage: 7; **Gnosis:** 6; **Willpower:** 7

Gifts: (1) Hare's Leap, Mother's Touch, Persuasion, Sense Wyrm, Spirit Speech; (2) Command Spirit, Glib Tongue, Name the Spirit, Spear Dancing; (3) Exorcism, Pulse of the Invisible; (4) Beast Life, Grasp the Beyond; (5) Call the Hunt

Rites: Rite of Boasting, Rite of Contrition, Rite of Cleansing, Rite of the Opened Caern, Rite of Binding, Rite of Wounding, Rite of Ostracism, The Hunt

Fetishes: None.

Laora d'Avennes: Burns-the-Wyrm

Laora was born in a small village in Northern France, within a seagull's flight of the sea. Her parents were Kinfolk, but only one of them was even vaguely aware of their heritage. Laora was a headache for them from the moment she learned to walk. One moment she's be playing dress-up with other little girls, the next she'd be getting into vicious brawls with local kids and then she'd be sitting on a cliff's edge, staring over the sea, dreaming of travel. Over the years

she learnt to moderate her temper somewhat, but would still fly off the handle in defense of other kids.

When she was sixteen, a group of drunken British holiday makers got a little too friendly with one of her classmates and Laora reacted with a depth of passion that she'd never felt before. The young Ahroun, in shock after her First Change, was taken from her village by a distant relative and his pack, who ensured the bodies of the tourists were never found. Laora was initiated into the Fianna in a caern in Southern England. There she fell in with a group of elders that were despairing members of the Brotherhood of Herne. The camp was nearly dead, its attraction to young Fianna undermined by its slip into national politics. The elders taught her the tales of the old Brotherhood, who would give their lives to defend caerns and Kinfolk a thousand miles from their own homes, simply because it had to be done. These tales sparked a fire in the young werewolf. The philosophy so closely matched her personal values that she couldn't help but work to rebuild the Brotherhood. An added bonus was the chance it gave her to indulge her wanderlust.

Laora soon rose to a prominent position in the admittedly spare ranks of the camp. She won her Garou name the day she answered Herne's call from a caern in Wales. Given a day's respite between attacks, she managed to conceive and set up a trap that led the majority of the Wyrm's forces into an abandoned building heavily doused in petrol. The few that didn't burn to death were easily tracked down and destroyed by the Wild Hunt.

With the death of the former leader of the Brotherhood, Laora rose unopposed to the leadership role and has overseen the revitalization of the camp. Her passion for the cause has attracted a large number of young Fianna from all over the world, glad to have a chance to win honor without having to leave their homes.

Image: To say Laora is flamboyant would be an understatement. The tall, lithe warrior is never seen out of dramatic, striking clothing even when she's preparing for battle. The only thing that matches her passion for clothes is her love of battle and red wine. When off duty, she dresses exquisitely in the latest fashions. She also has a heavy jewelry habit that most would consider ostentatious. She wears her auburn hair down to her shoulders, and she keeps the same coloration in all her forms.

Roleplaying Notes: Laora is consumed by passion for everything she does. The intensity with which she throws herself into something can be quite frightening. Lovers have been scared off by her obsessive affection and her packmates are a harried, weary bunch. Laora tends to ignore the bad things in life in her all-consuming joy in the glory of living as Garou. One moment she can be consumed with the joy of battle, the next with the beauty of a flower.

Breed: Homid

Auspice: Ahroun

Rank: 3

Physical: Strength 3 (5/7/6/4), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 4 (6/7/7/6)

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 2 (1/0/0/0), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3)

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Expression 4, Intimidation 2, Primal-Urge 2, Streetwise 1

Skills: Crafts 1, Drive 1, Etiquette 1, Leadership 4, Melee 3, Performance 2, Stealth 2, Survival 1

Knowledges: Computer 1, Investigation 2, Law 1, Linguistics 3, Medicine 1, Occult 2, Politics 3, Rituals 3, Science 1

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 3, Pure Breed 2

Rage: 6; **Gnosis:** 3; **Willpower:** 5

Gifts: (1) Falling Touch, Inspiration, Persuasion, Smell of Man, Speed of Thought; (2) Fire in the Belly, Howl of the Banshee, Staredown; (3) Heart of Fury

Rites: Moot Rite, Rite of Boasting, Rite of Talisman Dedication

Fetishes: "Joyeux," fetish axe (inflicts aggravated damage and allows the wielder to invoke the Gift: Spirit of the Fray once per night)

Stuart "Stalks-the-Truth" Brown

The reputation of Stalks-the-Truth as one of the Garou Nation's finest up-and-coming Ragabash was made the day he called King Jonas Albrecht a "whorehopper" to his face and

ended up, to everyone's surprise, drinking the night away with the Silver Fang rather than gathering up his own intestines.

Stuart is the elder son of Margaret and Colum Brown, a pair of Kinfolk living in the Appalachians in North America. At his father's insistence he was told nothing of his heritage and set out carving a career for himself as a journalist. He trained at the local community college, but disagreed with much of what he was taught. The traditional journalistic notion of objective reporting offended Stuart, especially as he soon realized it was often hypocrisy — finding "an angle" on the story always meant stepping away from objectivity, Instead, he adopted a gonzo journalistic style, putting himself and his opinions into the story.

Eventually, he managed to persuade one of the local papers to carry an investigative column written by him, left home and started traveling widely across the US. A year or so into his writing career, a national paper picked up on this angry young talent and he started traveling even farther, researching his pieces. His First Change came on one of those research trips. He poked a little too deeply into the business of a corrupt city commissioner, and only survived through of the intervention of a pack of local Garou.

Since then, he's lived a double life. On the surface he's an abrasive journalist digging into America's dark side, while in truth he's an idealistic crusader for Gaia. He's been instrumental in rooting out many Wyrm-corrupted organizations and individuals in the couple of years since his change. His obsession with sniffing out the truth, however unpalatable it might be, earned him his nickname. He's rapidly become one of the more recognizable Fianna in North America and may soon be a significant mover and shaker in the tribe's politics. As one of the leading champions of the idea that not every Fiann should be beholden to some Celtic throwback in Ireland, he tends to create controversy wherever he goes.

His hobbies include stirring up hornets' nests with his investigations, driving fast cars, taking recreational drugs and drinking himself silly in front of wresting or NASCAR racing on the TV.

Image: Stuart is an average height, rail-thin guy with a nice line in fashionable but inexpensive and poorly maintained suits and frequently offensive ties. His face is often surprisingly intense or even stern for one of his auspice. He wears his brown hair long, usually tied back in a ponytail. His Crinos and Lupus forms are a brown tinged with auburn. The most distinctive thing about him in all his forms is an intricate golden torc he wears around his neck at all times.

Roleplaying Notes: Although Stuart is witty and sharp, there's an abrasive edge to him when he's riled that stops most people getting too close. He can be extremely manipulative when he's researching a story. If you were to ask him if he believed in the fae, he'd say, "Only after I've washed down the third hit of Blue Lightning with some Everclear." For Stuart, something isn't true until it is proved to be so to his complete satisfaction, and he'll go to any lengths to reach that point.

Breed: Homid

Auspice: Ragabash

Rank: 3

Physical: Strength 2 (3/6/5/4), Dexterity 2 (2/3/4/4), Stamina 2 (4/5/5/4)

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 4 (3/0/0/0), Appearance 2 (1/0/2/2)

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 1, Dodge 2, Empathy 3, Expression 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Drive 3, Firearms 1, Stealth 2, Survival 1

Knowledges: Computer 1, Investigation 4, Law 2, Linguistics 1, Politics 3, Rituals 2

Backgrounds: Allies 1, Contacts 4, Kinfolk 1, Resources 3

Rage: 2; **Gnosis:** 4; **Willpower:** 5

Gifts: (1) Blur of the Milky Eye, Open Seal, Persuasion, Resist Toxin; (2) Jam Technology, Taking the Forgotten; (3) Reshape Object

Rites: Rite of Talisman Dedication

Fetishes: Torc of the Wolf

Extra Reading

It should be evident to the reader that this Tribebook is not an accurate reference work on historical Celtic cultures. Nor should it be. True, most — not all — Fianna come from bloodlines that are intertwined with areas where the Celts and related peoples used to hold sway. However, the Children of Stag are a continuous culture that reaches back for millennia, and that draws as much from wolf society as from the human societies they most commonly found themselves interbreeding with. They are not meant to be 100% accurate to the latest scholarly treatise on the Celts, any more than the Silent Striders are meant to be an accurate portrait of life under the Pharaohs (or, heaven forbid, the "truth behind ancient Egyptian religion"). The Fianna are werewolves first, and some of the discrepancies between what a Fianna sept is like and what a Celtic culture was like are very deliberate. After all, Fianna culture has spread farther and lasted longer than any human culture in existence; it's silly to assume that everything they did from the Impergium to modern days is going to be as accurate to one particular group of human cultures as possible.

However, Celtic myth and legend can provide some pretty interesting inspiration for Fianna. This is particularly true if you're playing a Fianna Galliard. After all, if you're going to ad lib a relevant legend about a mighty Ahroun who descended into the Dark Umbra to pay a debt of honor, it adds a little extra verisimilitude if the story is kind of like that of Pwyll and Arawn. Although it's poor form to assume that every historical figure of note was a supernatural (or Kin, or under a supernatural creature's influence), the stories of ancient battles and migrations might suggest some ideas for Fianna deeds that happened "in the shadows" at about the same time.

Just be careful about trying to tell your Storyteller things like "The Fianna shouldn't do that; that's not what the Celts were like!" You may find your character banished to a peat bog.

Books

History

There are any number of history books on the subject of Celts and the Celtic nations. Here are just a few to get you started, but the more you look the more you'll find.

The Celts (1980, Thames & Hudson) One of the pioneering modern studies of the Celts. Almost an essential read for anyone serious about the subject.

The World of the Celts (1993, Thames and Hudson Ltd.) by Simon James — An excellent overview of the Celts, with details on their life and history from all across Europe and western Asia. A fine starting point.

The Ancient Celts (1997, Oxford University Press) by Barry Cunliffe — Somewhat more in-depth than the previous book.

The Celts (2000, Cassell & Co) by John Davies. Written to accompany the Welsh TV channel S4C's series of the same name, it provides a good overview of modern thinking on the Celts. The series itself is well worth watching, if you can find it.

The Celts: Life, Myth and Art (1998, Stewart, Tabori & Chang) by Juliette Wood. A lightweight but lavishly illustrated book that's wonderful for flicking through in search of inspiration.

Celtic Britain (1997, Thames & Hudson) by Charles Thomas. A fairly heavy and scholarly work looking at the period between the departure of the Romans and the establishment of the English kingdoms in the late 7th Century. A good study of the Celts at a time of turmoil, which make great inspiration for the Fianna and their problems.

Pre-Christian Ireland (1988, Thames and Hudson Ltd.) by Peter Harbison. In the same series as the previous book; deals with the Celtic and pre-Celtic cultures of Ireland.

Rome's Enemies (2): Gallic and British Celts (MAA 158) by Peter Wilcox and *Arthur and the Anglo-Saxon Wars* (MAA 154) by David Nicolle (Osprey Publishing) are useful both for history and for imagery (both volumes feature plates of Angus McBride's excellent artwork).

The Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland (1989, Oxford Publishing) edited by R. F. Foster.

A Short History of the Wolf in Britain (1994, Pryor Publications) by James E. Harting — Originally published in 1880, this book gives early accounts of the wolf in the Isles until its apparent extirpation in 1760 or so. A nice volume if you can find it.

Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America (1985, Oxford University Press) by Kerby Miller. The title says it all.

Mythology

While all of the Fianna's Kinfolk had their own myths, those of the Continental Celts are nearly impossible to tease out of available literature; the mythology of the "Six Celtic Nations" — Ireland, Man, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall and Brittany — have been diluted by time and retelling through monks and others with imperfect understandings of the culture. Nevertheless, what remains can inspire "true tales of what the Fianna *really* did" for players and Storytellers alike.

The style and translation of the tales themselves vary in quality with the modern authors, so check reviews to get the best version. There are also many novels incorporating elements of Celtic legendary, though we'll stick to the old stuff here.

Legends of the Celts (1994, HarperCollins) by Frank Delaney. An accessible and well-written retelling of some central Celtic myths.

Myths & Legends of the Celts (1998, Senate). A weightier book, but similar in style to the previous book.

The Chronicles of the Celts (1999, Carroll and Graf) by Peter Beresford Ellis — A selection of tales from the Six

Nations, using extrapolations from extant stories to get as close to the pre-Christian tradition as possible. The introduction is also quite interesting, comparing the linguistic and cultural similarities between Celtic and Indian traditions. It also relates a creation myth for the Celtic peoples. The bibliography is also worth looking into.

A Dictionary of Irish Mythology (1989, ABC-Mythology, Oxford University Press) by Peter Beresford Ellis — Excellent source for who did what in the Irish tales.

Gods and Fighting Men (1904 with later reprints) by Lady Gregory — Written at the turn of the 20th century, this covers the coming and passing of the Tuatha de Danaan and the Finian Cycle. The volume was part of the Celtic resurgence of the Victorian and Georgian eras.

The Mabinogion is the title for a collection of Welsh tales; while colored by sensibilities of the medieval writers who recorded the tales, they are essentially Welsh.

The Tain (a.k.a. the *Tain bo Cuailnge*) is an (many say *the*) epic tale of Ireland. The translation by Thomas Kinsella is recommended.

GURPS Celtic Myth (Steve Jackson Games) by Ken and Jo Walton — A gaming supplement is seldom a good source for historical authenticity, but this volume is a rather useful guide for flavor. Includes short blurbs on the major myth cycles of Britain and really useful sidebars on culture and tradition.

Additional Material

A simple Internet search will reveal pronunciation guides for the various Celtic languages; translation dictionaries also have them. Useful for those Fianna who like obscure phrases to confound their enemies.

If all your traditional characters are named Angus McSomething, you might invest in a good name book, such as *The Melting Pot Book of Baby Names* (3rd edition 1995. Betterway Books) by C. L. Ellefson, or *Celtic Names for Children* (1998. O'Brien Press) by Loreto Todd, both of which categorize names by country. The former is particularly good for Fianna of Spanish, French or other extraction.

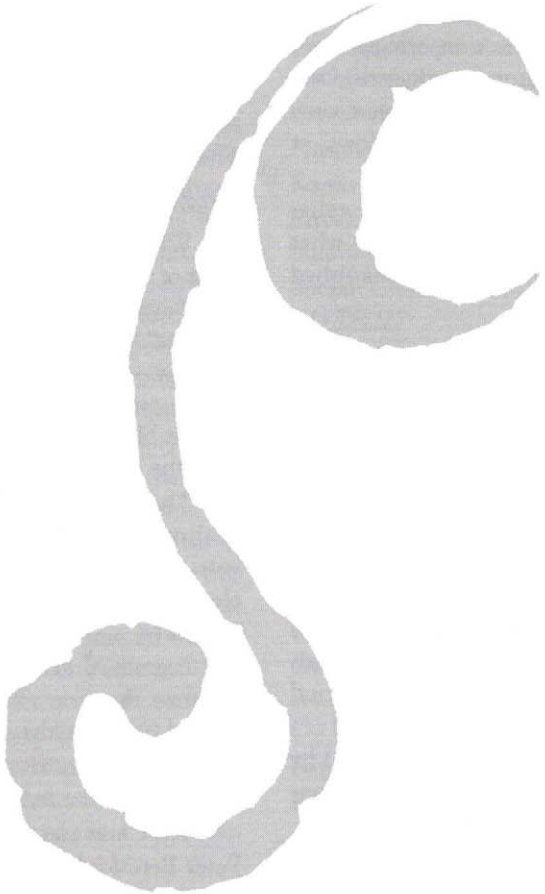
Comics

Sláine: Warrior Beyond Time (2001, Hamlyn) by Pat Mills, Dermot Power and Glenn Fabry. A collection of two of the many tales of Sláine, Celtic warrior and king, told in the pages of *2000AD*, a British comic. Bloody, violent, lecherous and bawdy, they make great Fianna reading.

Films

Braveheart. While its history if often lamentably inaccurate (The Battle of Stirling Bridge, without the bridge?), its spirit is spot on. So much so, in fact, that it had many Scots cheering in the aisles while they were watching the film

Trainspotting. A useful reference for a modern World of Darkness Scotland. Films like *the Commitments* do the same for Ireland, but with a more comedic tone.



FIANNA™

Name: Breed: Pack Name:
Player: Auspice: Pack Totem:
Chronicle: Camp: Concept:

Attributes

Physical
Strength ●OOOO
Dexterity ●OOOO
Stamina ●OOOO

Social
Charisma ●OOOO
Manipulation ●OOOO
Appearance ●OOOO

Mental
Perception ●OOOO
Intelligence ●OOOO
Wits ●OOOO

Abilities

Talents
Alertness OOOOO
Athletics OOOOO
Brawl OOOOO
Dodge OOOOO
Empathy OOOOO
Expression OOOOO
Intimidation OOOOO
Primal-Urge OOOOO
Streetwise OOOOO
Subterfuge OOOOO

Skills
Animal Ken OOOOO
Crafts OOOOO
Drive OOOOO
Etiquette OOOOO
Firearms OOOOO
Leadership OOOOO
Melee OOOOO
Performance OOOOO
Stealth OOOOO
Survival OOOOO

Knowledges
Computer OOOOO
Enigmas OOOOO
Investigation OOOOO
Law OOOOO
Linguistics OOOOO
Medicine OOOOO
Occult OOOOO
Politics OOOOO
Rituals OOOOO
Science OOOOO

Advantages

Backgrounds
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Gifts
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Gifts
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Renown

Glory
O O O O O O O O O O
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Honor
O O O O O O O O O O
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Wisdom
O O O O O O O O O O
❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑

Rank

Rage
O O O O O O O O O O
❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑

Gnosis
O O O O O O O O O O
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Willpower
O O O O O O O O O O
❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑ ❑

Health

Bruised		❑
Hurt	-1	❑
Injured	-1	❑
Wounded	-2	❑
Mauled	-2	❑
Crippled	-5	❑
Incapacitated		❑

Tribal Weakness

LOW SELF CONTROL:
ALL WILLPOWER ROLLS ARE
AT +1 DIFFICULTY

FIANNA™

Homid

No Change

Difficulty: 6

Glabro

Strength (+2)____
Stamina (+2)____
Appearance (-1)____
Manipulation (-2)____

Difficulty: 7

Crinos

Strength (+4)____
Dexterity (+1)____
Stamina (+3)____
Appearance 0
Manipulation (-3)____

Difficulty: 6

Hispo

Strength (+3)____
Dexterity (+2)____
Stamina (+3)____
Manipulation (-3)____
+1 Die to Bite Damage

Difficulty: 7

Lupus

Strength (+1)____
Dexterity (+2)____
Stamina (+2)____
Manipulation (-3)____
-2 Perception Diff.

Difficulty: 6

INCITE DELIRIUM IN HUMANS

Other Traits

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Fetishes

Item:_____ Level____ Gnosis____
Power:_____
Item:_____ Level____ Gnosis____
Power:_____
Item:_____ Level____ Gnosis____
Power:_____
Item:_____ Level____ Gnosis____
Power:_____

Rites

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Combat

Maneuver/Weapon	Roll	Difficulty	Damage	Range	Rate	Clip

Brawling Chart

Maneuver	Roll	Diff	Damage
Bite	Dex+Brawl	5	Strength+1/A
Body Tackle	Dex+Brawl	7	Special/B
Claw	Dex+Brawl	6	Strength+1/A
Grapple	Dex+Brawl	6	Strength/B
Kick	Dex+Brawl	7	Strength+1/B
Punch	Dex+Brawl	6	Strength/B

A=Aggravated Damage
B=Bashing Damage

Armor:_____

FIANNA™

Nature: Demeanor:

Merits & Flaws

Merit	Type	Cost	Flaw	Type	Bonus

Expanded Background

Allies

Mentor

Ancestors

Pure Breed

Contacts

Resources

Kinfolk

Totem

Possessions

Gear (Carried):

Equipment (Owned):

Experience

TOTAL:

Gained From:

TOTAL SPENT:

Spent On:

Sept

Name:

Caern Location:

Level: Type:

Totem:

Leader:

Fianna™

History

Prelude

Description

Age:

Hair:

Eyes:

Race:

Nationality:

Sex:

	Height	Weight
Homid:		
Glabro:		
Crinos:		
Hispo:		
Lupus:		

Battle Scars:

Motis Deformity:

Visuals

Pack Chart

Character Sketch

TRIBEBOOK: FIANNA

Fight For Glory, Strive For Wisdom

They laugh louder and weep harder than any other tribe. They fight as though they've already accepted their own deaths, but do their best to live life to the fullest. They treat their foes with no mercy, and they treat their families with enduring love. They make bloodthirsty enemies, but outstanding friends. They are the Children of Stag, the Fianna.

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